# SERMONS ON GREAT PAINTINGS

Rev. Harold Francis Branch, D.D.

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SERMONS ON GREAT PAINTINGS

HAROLD FRANCIS BRANCH, D.D.

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1. "The Sermon on the Mount"; 2. "Christ in Gethsemane"; 3. "Casting Out the Money Changers"; 4. "The Annunciation to Mary"; 5. "Christ Taken Captive."

# SERMONS ON GREAT PAINTINGS

THE SPIRITUAL MESSAGES OF
FIFTEEN OF THE WORLD'S GREAT
RELIGIOUS MASTERPIECES

BY

REV. HAROLD FRANCIS BRANCH, D.D.
First Presbyterian Church, Chicago Heights, Ill.

*Author of*

"Christ's Ministry and Passion in Art"
"Trial of Jesus" "How to Have a Happy Home"
Contributor of Sunday School Lessons and Lectures
for "The Ministers' Annual"

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Rev. W. Sherman Kerschner, D. D.,
Heidelberg Reformed Church, York, Pennsylvania


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# INTRODUCTION

To one who is familiar with Dr. Branch's first volume in art, an introduction to this, his second volume, seems superfluous. For what inducement is there to loiter in a cold unfurnished vestibule when a warm, attractively furnished room awaits within? To adapt that trite expression so often heard in presenting reigning favorites, "Dr. Branch needs no introduction."

Rather do I choose to accompany this volume on its errand of helpfulness with a word of testimony upon what his first book did for me and mine. With a trepidation felt by minister and people alike, we ventured upon a series of evening services extending from New Year to Easter, 1930, using the subjects as outlined in Dr. Branch's first volume. Our fears at attempting such a lengthy series were all unfounded. The results were as uniformly surprising as they were satisfactory. Exceeding all our fondest expectations; the fifteen "picture-sermons" shattered all existing records for a sustained interest over a long period. Our average attendance upon these services was more than trebled, and the most gratifying feature was the average attendance of 115 children throughout the series.

The value of and the interest in these picture-sermons was greatly enhanced by the use of reproductions of the masterpieces that were studied. A

copy was given into the hands of every worshipper as he entered the church. The publisher did a real service in making possible a supply of these pictures at a minimum cost. How many hundreds of them were ordered and reordered by us he alone knows. It is understood that the same arrangement may again be entered into with the publisher in connection with this second series of subjects.

I have greatly enjoyed the advance privilege of reading the sermons herein contained. They proceed from the basis of sound evangelical truth, and are rich in illustration and other homiletic content. The exposition of "The Sermon on the Mount" is most illuminating, and is alone worth the price of the book many times over.

There is here the material for one or more series of interesting messages which, supplemented by the liberal use of the pictures, will go far towards solving the evening service problem for the entire season. The collaboration of one of America's great interpreters and of a consecrated publisher who is essentially a "preachers' man" has here produced a volume delightfully readable and helpful.

W. SHERMAN KERSCHNER

York
Pennsylvania

## PREFACE

The ministers of the country accorded my book, "Christ's Ministry and Passion in Art," so gracious an acceptance, that I am made bold to offer this second volume of sermons dealing with the great masterpieces of art.

In this volume, I have dealt with some of the great pictures—not so widely known, perhaps, as those dealt with in the afore-mentioned volume—but nevertheless, equally valuable from the standpoint of inspiration and of message. They are also equally great as regards their rank in the world of art.

It is from the church that has come the greatest inspiration to the art of all days and times. The greatest artists have been the most deeply Christian. That statement has been made so often as to have become almost trite. There is a significance, however, in the familiar remark, which our present-day people would do well to consider. Nothing could be more beautifully appropriate than to base a series of Christian worship services upon some of these great masterpieces, and point out the spiritual implications that lie therein. People need to be encouraged to study art. They need to be instructed as to how to look at pictures. They need help to gain from pictures the inspiration and message which the artist intended for them.

Picture libraries are now being advocated. They will distribute pictures, and loan them just as our great public libraries loan books. If such libraries develop, they will do much to stimulate a public in-

terest in, and appreciation of, the great pictures of the world. It has long been recognized that books are sources of profound inspiration. Pictures are equally rich in their inspiration, and these great masterpieces dealt with in this book are especially so. The pictures contain the most delicate psychological suggestions. They are thrilling with life. They are vibrant with personality. They are tense with dramatic situations. They speak with a vigorous and rugged eloquence, or silently instill into the mind, their gentle, persuasive atmosphere of peace and of beauty. They are marvelous teachers, and profound preachers.

These sermons are not presented, by any means, as perfect specimens of the homiletic art. I have endeavored simply to indicate the way in which the pictures may be treated.

People desire to know about art. They appreciate being led into a sympathetic understanding of art. They will eagerly respond to a minister who interprets it for them, and helps them to appreciate it.

All of the sermons contained in this volume have been delivered in the author's own church and have met with very gracious acceptance, not only on the part of the regular congregation, but also on the part of critics, art circles, and committees. It has been demonstrated that it is possible to hold people's interest in a series of this kind, extending over a period of several months. Thorough conversions have resulted from the delivery of these sermons.

The author prays that God may richly bless the book, to the inspiration of other ministers, and to the salvation of souls.

H. F. B.

The Minister's Study
First Presbyterian Church
Chicago Heights, Illinois.

To her—
Whose patience, encouragement
and co-operation
have made this work possible—
this book is dedicated, with deep love
My Wife
Margaret Brokaw Branch

MINISTERS DESIRING COPIES OF THE PICTURES DISCUSSED IN THIS VOLUME, FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THEIR CONGREGATIONS, MAY SECURE THEM FROM THE PUBLISHER, IN QUANTITIES, AT VERY REASONABLE RATES.

-B, Pa. - 12-15-35 - pm. - 110 present. - 100 pictures.

# SERMONS ON GREAT PAINTINGS

## SERMON I

### "THE CHRIST"

(From the Painting by Hofmann)

SCRIPTURE LESSON: *Luke 2:40-52.*

TEXT: *Luke 2:46.* "And it came to pass, after three days, they found him in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions."

This is perhaps one of the most familiar paintings in all great art. It is a detail of the famous scene by Heinrich Hofmann, "Christ and the Doctors." This head has been copied from that picture literally thousands of times and hangs in many homes throughout the world. Nowhere does Hofmann evidence greater technical skill than in the portrayal of this fresh, vigorous, young face. It is the twelve-year-old boy. In his picture, "Christ and the Rich Young Ruler," the face of Christ is the mature counterpart of this face.

*The Artist*

Heinrich Hofmann was born at Darmstadt, Germany, March 19, 1824, and died in 1902 in Dresden, where he had become a professor in the University. He was a member of a large family. His parents were profoundly religious folk, and the

daily reading of the Scriptures in his home was a familiar sight to his young eyes. He was very early impressed by the beautiful pictures in the large Bible from which his father habitually read. This influence made itself evident in his later life, for, while his paintings cover a large field, and while he drew from mythology, literature and nature, he is best remembered by his Bible scenes, especially by his paintings from the life of Christ. He is the artist of the picture, "Christ and the Adulteress." "Christ's Sermon on the Lake" and "Christ Taken Prisoner" are among his most widely known pictures. Hofmann was an exponent of what is known as "the new idealism" in art. He was both a poet and a painter. The poetic sense is manifest in all of his work.

*What is in the picture?*

Here is

## I.

## HUMANITY

Here is humanity in its purity, in its power, in its perfection. Some interesting apocryphal stories have come down to us from the childhood of Christ. One relates how He made birds of clay and clapped His hands and caused them to fly off. Another tells of how, running home from school, He turned a corner suddenly and ran into a playmate who knocked Him down; whereupon, Christ arose and said, "Since thou hast knocked Me down, thou shalt fall down and not rise," and immediately the child fell dead! Many such absurd stories could be cited, all of them utterly baseless, and, of course, entirely ridiculous. He was perfect humanity. He was truly *boy* and truly *man*. His disciples ate with Him at the table and talked with Him. Philip had

been living with Him for a long while and evidently had difficulty, even at the last, in understanding Christ's unique relationship with the Father, and had to be admonished about it. It is significant, however, that he *took for granted* the basic fact of Christ's humanity. To be sure, the first heresy in the early church was one which denied the true humanity of our Saviour. The Docetists, and the Apollinarians, denied the true humanity of Christ, but the men with whom He associated most closely in His earthly life were perfectly sure of His humanity. This point needs to be emphasized in our day. A good deal of the unreality which is associated with the current discussions of the Deity of Christ arises from the fact that those engaging in the discussion have lost sight of His perfect humanity.

He was truly human *in His body.* He grew. He experienced thirst. He experienced weariness. He knew hunger. He suffered physically; and died as we do.

He was truly human *in His emotions.* Sometimes He was astonished; as at the people's lack of faith, or at the centurion's possession of it. He found His heart moved with compassion. He was sometimes indignant. He rejoiced, and occasionally felt depression so that He cried out, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death."

He was truly human *in His mental life.* He went through the normal development of the healthy boy. Luke, the doctor, declares, "He increased in wisdom, and stature and in favor with God and man," combining in his statement the intellectual, the physical, the spiritual and social development of the lad. He learned in the Jewish school which He attended in common with other Jewish boys of His age.

He stored His mind with the information which He gathered. All of His teaching bears the imprint of the early influences of His Nazareth home: the sparrows; the patches on old garments; the working of the leaven in the bread; the fish; the hen gathering her chickens—all of these are simply flashes of His memory as it returns to familiar scenes.

He was perfectly human *in His spiritual life.* He prayed. He relied upon the Father for strength. He had faith and expressed it triumphantly. But at other times He prayed in grief and agony, as in Gethsemane. He ofttimes prayed all night, or early in the morning. At the very center of His spiritual life was a clear dependence upon God. Some of the most serious battles that the Church has had to wage have been fought in the determination to maintain the true humanity of Jesus Christ.

He was perfectly human *in His temptations.* He was, of course, tempted more strongly than we are because His personality was so much greater than ours. As Tennyson said, "We are but broken arcs of Thee, and Thou, O Christ, art more than we." The great oak is more severely torn by the winds than the little sapling. He was tempted "in all points like as we are," which does not mean, of course, that He experienced the same temptation as that experienced by the drunkard, or by the miser, or by the libertine. It means that temptation *came to Him as it comes to us, through the two channels through which it can only come—desire or fear.*

Here is

## II

## DEITY

When we have emphasized His humanity we have emphasized only part of His personality. We can-

not stop there. It is true that the disciples found perfect humanity, but they found much more than that. When Frederick Dennison Maurice was at the height of his power as a preacher in London, a visitor came out of his service, saying, "There was something there not of this world." That is how the disciples felt about Jesus. However, that is putting it in a *very mild way.* They were perfectly sure that He was human; but it was humanity suffused and irradiated by a light that never was on land or sea. It subdued them. It awed them. It fascinated them. It mastered them. No artist, perhaps, has succeeded in putting upon canvas in a more beautiful way than has Hofmann, the inherent Deity of the Saviour. Here is Deity. We may test His Deity in a number of ways.

(1) We may test it *by the impression which He makes upon us.* Let the thoughtful reader ask himself what it is which he would have Christ say that He did not say; what it is which he would have Him do that He did not do; what it is which he would have Him be that He was not. Sidney Lanier has given expression in his poem, "The Crystal Christ", to the thought and conclusion of the Ages. He reviews one by one the great leaders of the race, commenting upon each one, finding in each one that which needs to be forgiven and excused, until he comes to Christ, in whom he finds nothing to forgive, and of whom he says:

"But Thee, but Thee, O sovereign Seer of time,
But Thee, O poets' Poet, Wisdom's Tongue,
But Thee, O man's best Man, O love's best Love,
O perfect life in perfect labor writ,
O all men's Comrade, Servant, King, or Priest,—
What if or yet, what mole, what flaw, what lapse,
What least defect or shadow of defect,
What rumor tattled by an enemy,

> Of inference loose, what lack of grace
> Even in torture's grasp, or sleep's, or death's,—
> Oh, what amiss may I forgive in Thee,
> Jesus, good Paragon, thou Crystal Christ?"

(2) *Test it by the impression which He made upon His enemies.* The High Priests had to secure false witnesses against Him. Even those who hated Him most, found it impossible to accuse Him of sin. The very men who desired His life-blood were unable to meet His challenge when He said to them, "Which of you convicteth me of sin." Strauss and Mill, who could not be accused of being eager followers of the Christ, pay Him, still, high tribute. Renan declared, "He has conquered." He goes on to say that no time can produce a greater. These are high words of praise from a self-confessed critic who does not have any great enthusiasm for His teachings.

(3) *Test it by His own consciousness.* Christ never prayed for forgiveness of sins, yet how sensitive He was to sin! He moved across the boards of time in perfect self-assurance. He declared that He was come "to save the world." He said that He was the source of life. He declared Himself to be "the way, the truth, and the life," and said that no man could come unto the Father, but by Him. He further identified Himself with the Father, saying, "I and the Father are One." He claimed preexistence: "Before Abraham was, I am." He claimed superhuman power: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." The sermon on the mount is full of unique self-assertion. He quietly sets aside the tradition

of the elders and says, "But I say unto you—." He abrogates the great feast of the Jews, and declares that henceforth *His own death* will take its place as the supreme memorial in the religious life of men. Now, these claims are so great as to be perfectly absurd *if they are not true.* There can be no middle ground.

He not only put forth these claims, but attested their truth by His own consciousness. The importance of this will be quickly seen if we imagine ourselves divine, and discover how quickly our pretensions would topple to the earth. Our deeds would quickly belie us and our consciousness itself would break down under the sheer weight of such a falsehood. There is a religious cult in Syria called the "Behais." Their leader, Abas Effendi, at one time made the claim to be God incarnate upon earth. But he could not bear it through. He could not carry himself Godlikely. He failed miserably. His own consciousness could not endure the strain. To-day, men are turning more than ever to a study of the inner consciousness of Christ. He *lived* and *died* like the God He claimed to be. Even the hard-hearted centurion who stood and watched Him die, said to himself, "Surely this Man was the Son of God." If it is said that the disciples invented the character of Christ, the reply is simply that it would be, for them, an impossible literary feat. The most superficial thinker will almost instantly discern the impossibility of such a thing. No one but Christ could have invented Christ. Dickens said, at one time, "I am having a troublous time with David Copperfield." It is extremely difficult for our greatest writers to draw consistent characters. What could illiterate provincials do?

(4) *Test His Deity by the Scriptures.* It is very significant that the Scriptures attribute to Christ exactly the same faculties and powers which they attribute to God the Father, and to the Holy Spirit. The following comparison will be interesting and will greatly reward a careful reading of the passages:

| | *God* | *Christ* | *Holy Spirit* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Creation | Is. 44:24 | Col. 1:15-18 | Gen. 1:2, Heb. 9:14 |
| Preserver | Neh. 9:6 | Heb. 1:1-3 | Acts 15:28, Rom. 8:26, 27 |
| Omnipotent | Gen. 17:1 | Phil. 3:20, 21, Heb. 1:1-3 | I Cor. 12:1 |
| Omnipresent | Ps. 139:7-10 | Matt. 18:20 | Ps. 139:7, I John 3:24 |
| Immutable | Mal. 3:6, Jas. 1:17 | Heb. 13:8 | Eph. 1:14, I Cor. 13:4 |
| Eternal | Ps. 90:2 | Rev. 1:17, 18 | Heb. 9:11, 14 |
| Infallible Judge | Jer. 17:9, 10 | Rev. 2:18, 23 | John 16:8, Acts 16:6, 7 |
| Sole Object of Worship | Matt. 4:10 | Phil. 2:9-11 | Matt. 12:31, 32 Mark 3:28, 29 |
| Omniscience | Job 24:1 | Matt. 9:4 | I Cor. 12:11, Luke 12:12, John 14:21 |

To these passages there may be added John 3:16 in which John speaks of Him as the only begotten Son, and John 1:14 in which a similar expression concerning Him is used; I Tim. 3:16, in which Paul describes Christ as God manifest in the flesh; Col. 2:9 in which the fulness of His personality is declared.

Here is

## III

## PURITY

That may seem a trite word to anyone who makes a study of this lovely face. It should, however, be

said, and emphasized in these days. Christ was without sin. Let that statement stand over in clear opposition to this statement: He was perfectly human. The two things should be emphasized. He was not subnormal, nor abnormal, nor supernormal. He was a *perfectly normal human being.* Sin is *natural, but is not human.* To say it is natural is simply to say that it is *in our nature from the fall.* It is not human, that is to say, it is *no integral part of human nature.* No man can justly excuse himself for sin by saying, "Well, I am only human." Christ was *true humanity. Christ was without sin.* Sin is an intruder. Sin is a kink, a twist that got in at the origin of the race. Adam, at his creation, when he was still without sin, was *perfect humanity.* After his sin he was *less human* by that much, than he had been before. Milton has pictured the event and circumstances in beautiful way:

"Him, God beholding from His prospect high,
Wherein past, present, future He beholds,
Thus to His only Son, foreseeing, spake:
'Only begotten Son, seest Thou what rage
Transports our Adversary? Whom no bounds
Prescrib'd, no bars of hell, nor all the chains
Heap'd on him there, nor yet the main abyss
Wide interrupt can hold; so bent he seems
On desperate revenge, that shall rebound
Upon his own rebellious head. And now
Through all restraint broke loose he wings his way
Not far off heav'n, in the precincts of light,
Directly tow'rds the new created world,
And man there plac'd, with purpose to assay,
If him by force he can destroy, or worse,
By some false guile pervert; and shall pervert,
For man will hearken to his glozing lies,
And easily transgress the sole command,
Sole pledge of his obedience: so will fall,

He and his faithless progeny: Whose fault?
Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of Me
All he could have; I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall'."

We sometimes say that human nature is a wicked thing. The fact is, that *fallen* human nature is a wicked thing, and it is, of course, only fallen human nature with which we have to deal. How magnificent our nature must have been before the fall is evidenced by the marvelous ruins now remaining! Human nature, as it came from the hand of God, was a pure, sinless and glorious thing. In this connection there is a very interesting inference that may be drawn, as it seems to me, with great justice from a comparative study of certain verses in the Scripture. We are told that God created man in His own image. (Gen. 1:26). We are told, also, in Psalm 104:2 that God is *"covered with light as with a garment,"* while Genesis 3:10 speaks of man feeling ashamed because he *was naked!* Now the word "naked" certainly does not refer to any absence of clothing for he had *never had* any clothing. One wonders if the inference is not justified, that man, at his fall, lost a splendid covering of light, an essential radiance that surrounded his person like the light that surrounds God, and which he had, being made in God's image; and which he lost at the fall, and for which he has vainly sought to substitute, in later days beautiful and ornamental clothing. It is, of course, not a vital point, but one which is at least suggestive; especially in view of the fact that man is the only part of God's creation that feels a great necessity for covering his body with clothing. Nothing is more beautiful than a magnificent horse. No one would think of draping clothes on a horse, or any other of God's mag-

nificent handiwork. Man only has to cover his body with clothing. Is it because he has lost that glorious covering of light which was his by right of his sonship to God, and with which God originally endowed him? Is the radiance in which Christ appeared on the mount of Transfiguration indicative of that primal and natural glory which belongs to men; which we lost through sin, but which we will regain when "our bodies will be raised, like unto His own glorious body according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself?"

Here is

## IV

## POWER

In this face there is the power of restraint. Tennyson has Sir Galahad remark, "My strength is as the strength of ten because my heart is pure." One should think of the things Christ *did not do,* which He might very well have done. He never established a home; yet what a wonderful husband and father He would have made! He never led a successful revolution; yet at one period of His ministry He was such an influential hero that He might have overturned the throne of the emperor. He did not strike His enemies dead at Gethsemane; yet by a single word He might have summoned to His assistance twelve legions of angels. He did not come down from the cross; yet to have done so would have been, from the physical side, a very trivial thing to His power. He exercised all through His life the power of restraint. His power today in the hearts of men is marvelous beyond description. He is changing hearts and lives. His posthumous influence is beyond the power of language to describe. He is doing

in the world today a work which no man could do. Julius Caesar is not raising dead men today. Martin Luther is not taking men, dead in trespass and sin, and washing them white as the very snows, redeeming them to a new and beautiful life, but Christ is doing that. He is transforming the roue into a man of purity and honor. He is sending him out into the world with a cleansed conscience to do the work of a man. He is taking the weakling and making of him a man of strong purpose and determination; and furthermore, He is doing the thing that is really harder to do, namely: He is redeeming *good* people. He is taking the proud, the selfish, the pitiless, the rich, who have everything and do not know they have nothing, and is revealing to them the realities of their own life, and giving to them the realities of His life. On every hand He is releasing men from the shame and guilt of sin, as well as from its power. He is indeed the conqueror.

"I saw the conquerors riding by
With cruel lips and faces wan:
Musing on kingdoms sacked and burned
There rode the Mongol Ghengis Khan.

And Alexander, like a god,
Who sought to weld the world in one;
And Caesar with his laurel wreath;
And like a thing from Hell, the Hun;

And, leading like a star, the van,
Heedless of upstretched arm and groan,
Inscrutable Napoleon went,
Dreaming of empire, and alone.

Then all they perished from the earth,
As fleeting shadows from a glass,
And, conquering down the centuries,
Came Christ, the Swordless, on an ass."

Here is

## V

## PERSONALITY

It is always personality which moves us. Most of us do not remember much of what our childhood teachers said, but we never forget *what they were.* Personality touches us at more points, and in more vital ways than any force in the universe. It is simply unthinkable scientifically, philosophically, theologically, or in any other way that God should not at some time, in some way, have spoken to His children in an incarnation. Ideas beautifully expressed, eloquently spoken, persistently urged will never be effective in transforming men's lives, in changing the current of history, and in working out to large ends in the life of the world, *until they become incarnate. They have to be clothed upon with flesh* before they conquer. George Eliot says, "Ideas are poor ghosts. They pass athwart us in their vapor and our sunfilled eyes do not discern them. But sometimes ideas become clothed upon with flesh. They speak to us in appealing tones. They look upon us with eloquent eyes. They lay soft, compulsive hands upon us, and then we are drawn to them as a moth is drawn to flames. Then they shake us like a passion." That is a very beautiful description of the incarnation; for that is exactly what God did in and through Jesus Christ. The prophets, the judges, the great leaders of the Old Testament times, had, for generations, been declaring the truths about God, but it was only when Christ came to gather up, in the fullness of His wonderful personality, all of these truths to which the ancient writers had been seeking to give emphasis, that man really understood them. It is a perfectly simple principle, one which is utterly unavoidable and one which is powerfully

operative in the world today. Men cannot grow excited about abstract ideas, nor do they quickly lay down their life in devotion to some technical statement. For example, we say that we believe in the monogamist ideal of the family. There is very little ardor, however, or vividness associated in our feeling until our own experience has included that of family life. *Our entire zeal for the abstract idea, roots itself in concrete homes we have known. We believe in them* and in the lives that were lived there. *We do not defend a theory. We defend and advocate a life that we have known.* It is personality that counts. For example, again, we say we believe in democracy. If we analyze our belief, we will discover that it roots back in the inspiration of great personalities. We talk about *democracy,* and we think about *Lincoln.* We believe in *him.* He was democracy, personified. The deep secret of America's confidence in democracy today lies, the searcher will find, not nearly so much in a *belief* in a *theory* of government as it is *belief* in *personality,* in *lives* like that which democracy makes possible. *So Christianity centers in Christ.* It is *belief in* a *personality.* It is *belief* in *Jesus.* It was His personality that drew the first disciples. It is His personality that draws people today. *Hearts are moved, not by abstract theories, or the vague statement of general principles,* but *by the insistent, tender, compelling impact of personality upon personality.* The comfort of the Christian lies in the fact that our salvation is secured for us and promised to us by a *personality*—the personality of Christ Jesus—the Son of God.

## Sermon II

### "THE SISTINE MADONNA"

(From the Painting by Raphael)

Scripture Lesson: *Philippians* 2:1-11.

Text: *Philippians* 2:6, 7. "who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men."

Above the door of the Institute of Fine Arts in Chicago appears this sentence, "All Passes, Art Alone Remains." It is not necessary to enter into argument as to the accuracy of this statement. It is true, as we know, that some things pass away, while others have qualities which guarantee permanence. The word of Paul when he directed his converts to "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord," is a word not only of admonition, but of reassurance. We have confidence in the permanence of spiritual attainments. It is impossible to get men enthusiastic in sewing diamonds to tissue paper, but if we can attach these diamonds of character, the attainment of which is so difficult, to a permanent fabric, we will enter into the work with enthusiasm. Browning declares, "Not one good shall be lost." One of the fundamental axioms of science is the conservation of matter. If *matter* is conserved, what must we say about the *impossibility of there being lost in God's universe, a single sacrificial deed of noble, tender-hearted service.* No good thing can ever be lost. These pictures present truths that will

outlast the universe. They endure because they are flashes, partial and fleeting to be sure, yet very true revelations of God.

This picture, the Sistine Madonna, is in the Royal Art Gallery at Dresden. Someone has declared that here art is supreme. It is certain that this gallery contains treasures of surpassing value. The finest examples of Raphael's art are here. The vision which led him on and left upon all of his work an imperishable mark is nowhere more manifest than in this picture, the Sistine Madonna. He painted it originally for a little church in Pianceza, Italy. It occupies now a room by itself in this famous gallery. It is a symphony in color. It casts a spell upon all who behold it, surrounded as it is by lovely draperies, set off in distinctive way by the artistic lighting from which it receives all possible benefit. Visitors who come in, do so silently, and stay without any conversation. It is considered by many to be the greatest of all pictures, even surpassing Leonardo's Mona Lisa. "The Sistine Madonna," says Gillet, "is the attempt of the artist to express the supernatural. It is the most beautiful devotional picture in existence. The impression is obtained not only by the idealism of its form, but by the vision-like representation of space; by the scheme of clouds upon which the virgin is upheld; and by the solemnity of drapery. An almost forbidding mystery fills this canvas, truly unequaled in any other of Raphael's work." It was the last Madonna that Raphael painted, in 1519, one year before his death.

Raphael painted, ordinarily, on canvas of rather heavy texture but this picture, contrary to his custom, was painted on very fine textured material,

for the monks in the monastery of San Sisto. There is a legend that the two little figures at the bottom of the picture, are representations of two children who watched him at his work. There is a question as to whether this legend is accurate.

The patriarchal figure in the picture is that of Saint Sixtus. The young woman's figure on the right is that of Santa Barbara. From the standpoint of technique, it is interesting to notice that the peculiar "divine" expression on the face of the mother of Christ is secured by an unusual breadth between the eyes, and by a peculiar non-focusing of the eyes, by which they are made to look at no particular point, but into indefinite distance. In the chamber in which the picture is exhibited, the light comes from the right. A long bench or lounge is placed in front of the picture for the convenience of visitors. A continuous procession of lovers of art comes and gazes silently at this lovely work of art. It seems, indeed, not to be a picture, but a lovely vision. The form of the virgin seems to float in space, entirely detached from the canvas. Her garments are moved by the very airs of heaven. The face is that of a real woman—the same whose face appears in the Donna Velata in Pitti Palace. The figure of the child in her arms is one of the finest pictures of the infant Christ in art. His limbs rest in the secure support of His mother's arms with repose which seems to be at once full of living power and implicit confidence. So lifelike is the representation that one would not be surprised to see the child raise His hand. The picture was painted at the order of Pope Julius II, who, at the age of seventy, decided to embellish the Vatican and employed for the work, Leonardo, Raphael, and Michael Angelo. This picture ranks, as a sublime inspira-

tion, with such creations as Hamlet and the Divine Comedy, creations which, as Horace says, "Strike the stars."

*The Artist.*

Raphael was born at Urbino on Good Friday in the year 1483. His father was a painter of only mediocre ability, but a man of real intelligence, and competent to direct his children in proper ways of living and of industry. He placed the boy out as apprentice to an artist, Petri Perugino. Raphael learned much from his instructor. In fact, he became able to imitate him so exactly that his copies cannot be distinguished from the original works of the master. Raphael went with Bernardino Pinturicchio to Siena. He then went to Florence. His four year residence there marks a new stage in his art. There he began that series of great Madonnas which has made the church his debtor forever. The Madonna of the Grand Duke, so called because it formerly belonged to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand III, is sometimes also called the Madonna Del Viaggio, which means, "the Madonna of the Journey," because wherever Ferdinand went he carried it with him. It is now preserved in Pitti Palace at Florence.

Having gone to Rome at the request of Pope Julius II, Raphael spent twelve unparalleled years there, multiplying his masterpieces and leaving behind him the most complete, serene and harmonious expression of the Renaissance. His genius gave expression to the most exalted as well as to the most divine topics which work he performed out of a seemingly inexhaustible resource.

*What is in the Picture?*

Here is

## I

## THE INSPIRING POWER OF RELIGION

It is perhaps a truism to say that all great art has been inspired by religion. It is perhaps not so generally recognized that even those pictures not thought of as distinctively religious are rooted in religious ideas. "The Man With the Hoe," for instance, is eloquent with religious truth, and the dignity of manhood. When one remembers that in Raphael's time the printing press had just been built in order that the Bible might be printed; Columbus was sailing westwards in the hope that he might find converts to the cross, as well as a waterway to India; Michael Angelo was working on St. Peter's Cathedral: all of these men inspired by a desire to add glory and dignity and honor to the church, is it not significant that these men whose names live down to this day are those who connected their lives with the Kingdom of God, and wrought their work in a desire to advance that Kingdom? Their work is imperishable because they joined it to an imperishable cause. No great good for the advancement of man was ever born in any heart or carried forward on the feet of courageous, persistent and costly sacrifice, without the influence of religion. Its influence may not always be visible, but it is always present.

Here is

## II

## HOPE

It is vividly portrayed in the figure of Saint Sixtus who points to a needy world as he looks at the Saviour. Sixtus is an old man. One imagines he

might have said words which a modern poet has placed in the mouth of an old man addressing a new born babe.

"A tired old doctor died to-day and a baby boy was born—
A little new soul that was pink and frail, and a soul that was gray and worn.
And—half-way here and half-way there
On a white, high hill of shining air—
They met and passed and paused to speak in the flushed and hearty dawn.

"The man looked down at the soft, small thing with wise and weary eyes.
And the little chap stared back at him with startled, scared surmise.
And then he shook his downy head—
'I think I won't be born,' he said.
'You are too gray and sad!' He shrank from the pathway down the skies.

"But the tired old doctor roused once more at the battle-cry of birth,
And there was memory in his look, of grief and toil and mirth.
'Go on!' he said. 'It's good—and bad:
It's hard! Go on! It's ours, my lad.'
He stood and urged him out of sight, down to the waiting earth."

Saint Sixtus looks upon the young Christ, and regards Him with hope, as he points to the needy world. It is an eloquent way of saying that He *is* our hope, and indeed, *our* only hope. Many ways of dealing with sinful people have been suggested. Some say segregate. Others say operate. Still others say educate. But the only remedy is to regenerate. Segregation will not work. We live in one another's back yards. The world is a neighborhood, no matter how much we may deplore that fact. A revolution in Russia has an instant effect upon the

New York Stock Market. Boats which dock at San Francisco, run their cables through large tin pans to prevent Chinese rats, with the plague germ, from contaminating American homes. Segregation will not work. Operation will not work. The Psychopathic Ward of the hospital can never replace the Gospel. Education will not work. An evil man is only made more dangerous by education. The only hope of the world is regeneration through Jesus Christ. It is not environment that is the trouble with men. It is not clean shirts that they need, but clean hearts. We cannot make a gentleman out of a hog by planting roses in the pigsty. We have to change the hog. Environment, of course, has its effect upon men, but *men make their own environment.* "Myself am hell," said Milton's Satan.

The regenerating power of Jesus Christ does the work. The hope of old Saint Sixtus has been realized in multitudes of hearts.

Here is

## III
## FAITH

It is typified in the figure of Mary and the child. It is not blind and unintelligent, like that of Alice in Wonderland, who was told if anything seemed impossible, she must "shut her eyes and swallow hard, and believe." This is not the kind of faith that does that. Here is an *honest,* open eyed faith, ready to accept a commission to a waiting and needy world. Consider Mary's faith. What a fearful announcement it was to her. How blandly we read the record! Consider Christ's faith in the most difficult work, and the most depressing circumstances. We do not make enough of the sheer, undiscourageable faith that characterized the Saviour through all of His earthly life. He might have been

distressed and discouraged by the smallness of the field which was His in which to do His work. We speak of "from Dan to Beersheba" as a figure synonymous with bigness, *but it was only one hundred and thirty-nine miles.* Palestine could be tucked into one half of New Hampshire. It was comparable to a petty state of India today. He might have been discouraged, on the other hand, by the *inadequacy of the human instruments* with which He had to work. Nothing irritates a skillful workman more than to have a tool break in his hand, or to have to use blunt instruments! He might have lost faith because of the misunderstanding and slander and open hostility with which His work was met. It is a fact that the more highly a man thinks of himself and his work, the more quickly and deeply he resents any misinterpretation of it. Alexander Dowie or Wilbur Voliva in our present day, would grow red in the face with any slight or slur. What must have been the feeling of Christ, when, having always exalted His spirit over His body, and having allowed His soul to outbalance all of the world beside, He was called, "a wine bibber and a glutton." What must have been His feeling when, He, who was so reverent in His thought and attitude toward God, was called "a blasphemer;" and, interested in no earthly kingdom for Himself, refusing to take a crown or lead a revolt, found Himself accused of political ambitions; being utterly devoted to the truth, yet accused of being "a liar"? As one reviews these handicaps which were His, one understands more clearly the amazing, *undiscourageable faith* which characterized His life, from His entrance into the world until He bowed His head upon the cross and said, "It is finished."

Here is

## IV

## LOVE

It is typified by Saint Barbara. Her face is averted as in a sense of unworthiness. True love is always modest and self-depreciating. Raphael in this picture is attempting to express, through her attitude and face, the tremendous volume of love that has been poured out at the feet of Jesus throughout the years. It is certainly the world's supreme phenomenon. This it was that amazed Napoleon. Said he, "I have conquered millions. Alexander, the Great, conquered multitudes. Caesar was a great world conqueror, but today there are more who would die for Jesus of Nazareth than ever owed allegiance to my banner or to Alexander's or to Caesar's." The thing that puzzled the Corsican is absolutely true. *Christ has conquered through the power of love.*

Here is

## V

## THE LOVELINESS OF CHILDHOOD

It is said that nowhere in art is there a more lovely child's figure than that of the infant Saviour here. It is the artist's tribute to childhood. What a debt childhood owes to Christ! I spoke of a legend which identified the two figures at the bottom of the picture with two little children who watched the artist at his work. Another legend, probably more accurate, identifies them with little children related to him who had passed away. The wings are, of course, simply to typify spirit. This is the custom of all artists. Our departed dead are not angels. They never have been and they never will be angels. Angels are an entirely distinct and separate order of

creation. They never become men. Men never become angels. Our departed are disembodied spirits—much superior in power and happiness and estate to the angels.

Here is

## VI

## THE SUPERNATURAL

Raphael intended by the draperies drawn back to indicate *the emergence into time of God's eternal plan for the redemption of man.* The picture is a clear testimony to the faith of the artist in the reality of the supernatural. Mary and the child are shown stepping from eternity into time. Christ is to begin the work held in the purpose of the Father's heart for Him from all eternity. Clustered about the edge of the curtain are to be seen the tiny angel faces. These are the angels, which inhabit heaven; illustrating the scripture text which declares that man's redemption and God's plan for it are so wonderful that the "angels desire to look into it." Christianity is a supernatural religion. It is supernatural in its origin. It is supernatural in its power. It is supernatural in its result. Here in this picture is the meeting-place of two worlds. It is a sheer impossibility for a man to live in one world at a time. To attempt to do so means to miss the best here, and to fall entirely short of the next. These things should certainly not be strange to this modern generation. The fact is, the veil between the seen and the unseen, between the material and the spiritual, between the known and the unknown, between the natural and the supernatural, is *wearing very thin in these days.* We are steadily discovering tremendous forces. We are learning more and more that this is a spiritual universe, all atingle and aquiver

with spiritual forces and power to the very farthest reaches of our frontiers. We are like children reaching our hands into grab bags, pulling out prizes. No one knows what may be the next discovery. Thompson, in his book "Outline of Science," declares, "The very dust has a complexity which baffles us." If this is true of dust, it is altogether likely that spirit and spiritual forces may continue to puzzle us for some time to come!

Here is

## VII

## THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION

No theology can explain it. No science can understand it. No philosophy can make it plain. Every incarnation is marvelous. The man or woman who can stand in the presence of a human birth and not be moved is a wooden individual. It is the supreme miracle. It is the holiest power with which God has endowed man. But the birth of Christ far transcends the wonder and mystery of mere human birth. Here in this picture Raphael has presented, in beautiful way, the surpassing wonder of the incarnation. He pictures that tense, dramatic, moment when the veil between heaven and earth is parted. Mother and child step forth together, and for the first time look upon the world. Amazement, surprise, wonder, faith, love,—all of these things are combined upon this canvas. There is a remarkable combination in the face, as someone has pointed out, of that which is both human and divine. It is infancy, of course. But the artist has made it very distinctive infancy. In Raphael's conception, it is as though the mystery of the strange mission had just burst across the consciousness of the mother and the babe. It is as though they are appalled by the

tremendousness of the task. At this moment the "Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." This is the tick of the incarnation. It is the moment when Christ took upon Himself the form of sinful flesh; when, in Him, God and man joined hands, and walked down the paths of time! It is that moment which Paul so graphically describes in Phil. 2:5-8: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross."

## SERMON III

## "THE ANNUNCIATION TO MARY"

(From the Painting by Fra Angelico)

SCRIPTURE LESSON: *Luke 1:26-40.*

TEXT: *Luke 1:28.* "And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee."

*The Artist.*

Fra Angelico was born at Vicchio, near Florence, Italy, in 1387. His baptismal name was Guido. When twenty years old, he was admitted to a monastery at Fiesole where he changed his name to Giovanni, and became known as Fra Giovanni da Fiesole. After death he was called Angelico, which means "The Angelic." In 1435 he left Fiesole and moved to the convent San Marco at Florence. While still at Fiesole, he had painted "The Coronation of the Virgin" which is now in the Louvre. In San Marco he painted one of his greatest pictures, "The Last Judgment"; also many Madonnas. "The Crucifixion," which he painted here ranks among his finest work. He decorated the cloisters and corridors, and walls of the cells with sacred subjects. Pope Eugenius IV called him to Rome to decorate a chapel adjoining St. Peter's. The chapel was razed less than a century later to make room for the great staircase in the Vatican Palace. When Fra Angelico was sixty years old, he began, at the order of the Pope, the great work of his life,—namely the decoration of the chapel of Nicholas V in the Vatican.

Angelico disregarded every earthly advantage. He lived in the most simple style, and labored continually at his painting. His tremendous ability and indomitable energy would have made him a very rich man had he taken any thought whatever of riches. He said, however, that the only true riches was contentment with little. He might have occupied a position of command among many artists, but would not do so, declaring that there was less fatigue and less danger of error in obeying rather than in commanding others. In this attitude he manifests the sturdiness of his Roman Catholic principles. When he does not leave his proper sphere, namely,—the portrayal of tender feelings, a great and silent joy of the heart, a holy ecstasy or tender sadness,—his pictures are unsurpassed. He is a master in the delineation of these sentiments; and at his best, his pictures have the effect of the silent prayer of a child. After he had once finished a painting he would never retouch it. He believed that such was the will of God. He also declared that he never took a brush in his hand without first offering a prayer.

We know very little of his early days. The town Vicchio in which he was born, stands in the lovely valley of the Mugello. Travellers can still see part of its six-sided rubble walls, and the two massive gateways on the east and the west. It is very evident, from the technique of his work, that in his youth he had a thorough professional training under some master, who was able to initiate him into the mysteries of the technical side of his art. He was true to his own temperament. Artistically he dared to live his own life, and his work reveals that in other things he was no respecter of persons. His development was continuous, and always along the line of his greatest ability,—namely the portrayal

of the tender, reverent emotions of simple faith and angelic face, form and service. He never allowed himself to be diverted from his own particular line by the force of some other powerful personality. He was profoundly influenced by the great preacher and scholar, Giovanni Dominici. He did a great deal, by his painting, to keep in check the excesses of some of the humanists. The Convent of Fiesole had been founded by this great preacher, and into this convent the young artist entered, taking the vows of perpetual poverty, chastity and obedience in the great order of St. Dominic. Fra Angelico painted while he prayed and prayed while he painted. His inspiration was as genuinely artistic as it was deeply religious. He combined the true saint with the true artist. He never painted a Crucifixion without tears streaming down his face. His pictures reveal very clearly his sincere and deep devotion to the religion of Christ. He was deeply emotional in his thought, in his life, and in every expression of his art. It was in the convent of San Marco that much of his greatest work was done. It was here in a cell that Savonarola lived, and put in many hours of that study which led to his development as the greatest preacher of his age.

Unfortunately, some of Fra Angelico's least worthy productions have gained an unfortunate popularity, and have been peddled about as examples of his art, until they stand, in the mind of many persons, as characteristic specimens of his work. The manufacturers of productions of the work of the old master, seem to have conspired with popular writers to keep a derogatory view of this great artist's work. He is perhaps the only master painter in the world's history of whom it is true that the feeblest of all his productions are those by which he is most widely

known. I refer to the little angel images playing on musical instruments which adorn the frame of the Madonna del Linajuoli. These figures hold a high place in popular estimation, but are artistically contemptible. They are celestial dolls, flat as paper, stuck fast to their gold frame. Even the works possessed by the Louvre are not his most remarkable paintings. His frescoes which are to be seen only in his native country and his "Coronation" at San Marco, rank among his greatest work. The great painters understood and recognized that he was a master. Michael Angelo said, in speaking of these pictures, "The good monk visited paradise and was allowed to choose his models there." Another says, "The light of his studio came from paradise."

*The Picture.*

This picture is mediaeval. The original is found in the church of the Gesu, Cortona. Immaculate modesty is combined with virginal candor. One critic has said that, by the side of this virgin, Raphael's virgins are merely vigorous peasant girls. Michael Angelo has declared that in this picture the artist is expressing the inner life of the adoring soul. The virgin is seated in an open loggia, reverently receiving the message brought by the angel, who has just alighted, and bowed to her, and designated her as the chosen of God. Here is a strange otherworldliness, a spiritual claim, which the artist possesses in a singular degree. It is easily recognized, even by those who have no very great knowledge of painting or art. There is in the face and attitude of the virgin, a marvelous simplicity and innocence, combined with intensity and purity of religious emotion. There is a purity of coloring, and radiant

holiness and ecstatic repose that make his figures inexpressibly lovely, and purifies the imagination of those who look upon them, lifting the heart like the upward line of a gothic spire. His pictures introduce one to heaven, and give one visions of the inconceivable glory which eye hath not seen nor ear heard. He has been called the court painter of heaven.

There is a real art in looking at pictures. One should look first intently into the eyes of the prominent figure, until one feels the intensity and purity of the religious emotion with which they glow. Several faces should be examined then in the same way.

Next, one should look both at the eyes and mouth together, until one realizes that the faces express not only radiant vision and perfect faith, but sweetness of character and an entire lack of self-complacency. Notice then what great variety of expression you can see in the different faces which at first glimpse look almost exactly alike. Examine next the hands and observe that those that are not in an attitude of prayer or praise, are engaged either in some unselfish service or in a gesture of affection. The artist has a delightful way of making the hair add a touch of loveliness to the face. The back views are also extremely expressive. He puts into all his draperies an upward sweep which is subtly powerful. There is a charming simplicity of outline in the picture and a profound singleness of purpose. Notice the expression and gesture of the angel and the solemnity of his demeanor. Looking steadily at him one can almost hear his words "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." In the gesture and attitude of the virgin one can hear

plainly her words, "Behold the hand-maiden of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word."

*What is in the picture?*

Here is

## I

## SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD

We read the record with only half-seeing eyes, and with dull heart. We read back into it the accumulated glory of the centuries. It is true that the Messiah had been prophesied and that His coming had been foretold for ages. It is true that every Jewish girl had hoped to be the mother of The Deliverer! It is true, also, that it was the great national hope; but none had carefully considered the virgin birth as part of it, or as a personal problem, and here and now it is thrust upon this young woman with all of the amazing and embarrassing implications.

Mary was a simple Hebrew maiden. Her name in the Hebrew was Miriam. She dwelt in a little upland town of Galilee called Nazareth, just where the slope of the hills leads down to the Plain of Esdraelon,—the old battle field of Israel's history. Tradition says that her parents were named Joachim and Hannah. They had one other child who was a daughter named Salome. She appears later as the wife of Zebedee, a fisherman by the Lake of Galilee. (John 19:25, Matthew 27:56, Mark 15:40.) Her parents were godly peasant folk, and when she attained the age of twelve they betrothed her, tradition says, to a fellow townsman named Joseph. He resided at Nazareth, but was a native of Bethlehem. He traced his ancestry back to the ancient royal house. He was not, however, a princely personage, for the glory of the royal house had long

departed. He was a common artisan, a carpenter. This visitation came to Mary in the month of November, in the year 6 B. C.

Consider the staggering import of the thing! What explanation will be offered? Who will explain? Will people believe when the explanation is made? How sluggish and apathetic we are in our reading of the Scriptures! Suppose it had been you! Here is heroic submission. The general impression left by all the gospels is that during our Lord's life, the secret of His miraculous birth had been communicated to very few. Thus we read in Luke 4:22,—"Is not this Joseph's son?" In John 6:42,—"Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" And also in John 1:45, Philip says to Nathaniel, "We have found Him, of whom Moses, in the law, did write,—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." There is no evidence that the mysterious truth of the virgin birth was generally known during the apostolic age. The reason for this is not difficult to discover. The maiden would tell the story to her parents, and it, of course, would trouble them. They foresaw how it would seem to an incredulous world. It is a matter of history, that the unbelieving Jews made a base slander out of the story of the virgin birth when at length it was published. They charged Mary with infidelity, and even identified her paramour as a soldier Panthera. Because the good name of their daughter was in peril, Joachim and Hannah kept the story a close secret, even from Joseph, and presently, sent her away to an old kinswoman, Elizabeth, who dwelt far south in a village some four miles west of Jerusalem. She remained there three months, and when she returned her condition was apparent. Joseph drew the natural inference. It was only because he was reassured that

night in a dream that he acknowledged Mary as his espoused wife, and took her to his home with befitting reverence.

It was a wonderful mystery, and nothing strange that Joseph and Mary concealed it from an ill-judging world. It was known only to themselves and to their trusted intimates. (Luke 2:19, 51.) Mary observed and treasured in her heart every happening that accorded with her cherished secret. Among the early Christians, however, it was generally supposed that He was the son of Joseph and Mary by ordinary generation. The secret was unknown even to Paul. He was, indeed, the very last to learn it. It is only after Mary had passed to "where beyond these voices there is peace," that it was published. It first appeared in the Gospel according to Matthew, which was published shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in the year 70, and then in the Gospel according to Luke some fifteen years later. Notice that Matthew tells the story from Joseph's point of view, and Luke, who probably in the early day had the story from Mary, tells it from her point of view. John omits the story because his purpose was simply to supplement the record already written by his associates. There is however, in John a veiled, but, to the careful discerner, a very clear reference to the virgin birth. John 1:12, 13. Several of the early church fathers of the west quoted the passage, "Them that believe in the name of Him, who was begotten not of bloods," that is, the mingled blood of human parents,—"nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man (and husband), but of God." This passage is thus made a distinct statement of the virgin birth; and according to the earliest testimonies it was so written by the evangelist.

Submitting to the will of our Father does not involve unbroken cheer. A few years ago an American medical missionary, Dr. A. R. Shelton, was murdered by bandits in China. His station was on the border of Tibet. He was constantly engaged in hazardous journeys and difficult work. Some one asked him one time if he were never afraid on his long and lonely trips in the passes through the Tibetan Mountains. He replied, "I am scared to death most of the time!" but added, "Anybody who follows the will of God will be scared, because of the new paths he will have to follow." It is no sin to "be scared," —the sin lies in running away because of fear. Submission to the will of God involves real heroism, as it did in the case of Mary.

In considering, however, the matter of submission to the will of God, we should not forget that we are not only to *submit* to it, but also to *execute* it. No one really submits to God's will until he is ready to execute that will. We must allow His will to do whatever He will to us; but we also must resolve *to do* whatever His will *calls upon us to do.* John Hay, one of our great American diplomats, has given us this poem which expresses the thought.

"Not in dumb resignation
We lift our hands on high;
Not like the nerveless fatalist
Content to trust and die.
Our faith springs like the eagle
That soars to meet the sun,
And cries exulting unto thee:
'O Lord! Thy will be done!'

When tyrant feet are trampling
Upon the common weal,
Thou dost not bid us cringe and writhe
Beneath the iron heel;

In thy name we assert our rights
With sword and tongue and pen,
And e'en the headsman's ax may flash
Thy message unto me.

Thy will! It bids the weak be strong,
It bids the strong be just;
No lip to fawn, no hand to beg,
No brow to seek the dust.
Wherever man oppresses man
Beneath thy liberal sun;
Oh God, be there! Thine arm make bare
Thy righteous will be done.

Here is

## II

## WOMANHOOD

Mary was a woman. She was a lovely, pure, but plain woman. There was nothing miraculous about her. She was not superhuman. She was not strangely powerful, either in position or influence, then or now. She was not, and is not, the "Queen of Heaven." She makes no pretense to power or glory above that of any pure and lovely woman. She has no secret place of power in the heart of Jesus. He loved her no more than He loved the lowliest of His followers. When His friends came urging Him to return to His mother and His brethren, He declared that those who loved, and believed in Him, and followed Him were His mother and His brethren. (Mark 3:34). Mary was not immaculately conceived. The dogma of the immaculate conception was promulgated by Pope Pius IX on the anniversary of the feast of the conception, December 8, 1854, before two hundred Cardinals, bishops and other dignitaries. It has no basis, either in scripture or in logic. It solves no problem, but simply pushes the matter back another step. Here in this picture the artist has given us Womanhood, pure, tender, sweet and true, but *human womanhood* only.

The angel understands that Mary is only human, and that doubt will arise at once in her mind at his wonderful announcement. He proceeds to set these doubts at rest by telling her that a miracle no less wonderful than that which would happen to herself, had already been wrought upon her relative, Elizabeth. Mary replies in words which express at once her dignified humility, her meek and reverent innocence, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word."

Here we have seen *submission* on the part of *womanhood.* The explanation lies in the third point which the artist has given us in the picture, namely,—

## III

## THE SUPERNATURAL

In olden days God was accustomed, on occasion, to speak to His people in two ways. One was by the mystery of dreams and the other, through the visitation of angels. Job 33:14-20.

The artist emphasizes the supernatural in this picture in two ways.

### A

The supernatural appears in the angel himself.

Many stumble at this matter of the supernatural. It all depends, however, upon three questions.

1. *Was God able to do it?* If it is a question of power, of course, we can answer it at once. God is Omnipotent. "He toucheth the mountains and they smoke"; "He holdeth the sea in the palm of His hand." "He setteth bars to the waters." "I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered

that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not." (Job 42:2-6).

By such words as these, and many others, the inspired writer describes the all powerful hand of our God. If someone raises the question about the reign of law, we respond with another question—"Did God create the universe and then become its victim?" Many millions of centuries before the "reign of law" had become a phrase to be juggled about from lip to lip, the universe was a fact. Are we going to allow this phrase to become a kind of theoretical jailer, which will make God an unwilling prisoner of the universe? Certainly, if we are wise and alert, we will discover that this majestic Prisoner has always refused to stay locked up. In a very real sense, the term "the reign of law" is a phrase of the unilluminated imagination. Bergston has declared, "The intellect is characterized by a natural inability to understand life!" We are part of a living universe, which is simply the garment of God. The sunset reveals, in a partial way, the glory of His trailing garments. The rainbow is a drapery, which He throws about the shoulders of the dying storm. God transcends this universe, which is His garment, as the mind transcends the organ through which it is expressed. To stand in awe before the phrase "the reign of law" is to allow the mind to become "the paralyzed victim of a syllogism." Clearer thought perceives that God, the Creator, is the Master of the laws which He has made, and is, in no sense, and can be, at no time, their victim. Human personality, every day, transcends and uses natural law. No laws are violated; but they are combined in such way as to bring effects which could never be possible without the operation and dominance of a superior human personality.

If *we* can do such things, how much more is *God* able to do them. The matter turns on a second question:

2. *Is the universe so constructed as to enable Him to do it?* Granted His inherent power, are outer circumstances such that that power may be exercised?

In answer to that, one must say that never was there a time when men had the scientific right to believe in the absolute spirituality of the universe as to-day. The old scientist who rushed about shouting, "My laws!" "my laws!" is done for; and with him will speedily disappear all of his hangers-on. We believe more and more in the majesty and dominance of law, and in its subtle operation in every field of life. We believe, also, more and more profoundly in the amazing extent of human ignorance. One of our modern scientific authorities, J. Arthur Thomson, says "The very dust has a complexity and activity heretofore unimagined." He says in another place, "The new theory of the atom amounts almost to a new conception of the universe." He talks about "*life, as we know life.*" In that expression he discloses the attitude of scientific thinkers—thinkers who refuse to allow their knowledge of physical facts to victimize them to the extent that they become fanatically dogmatic. How absurd will all of our ponderous reasoning and weighty arguments appear to us in that day when we shall "see clearly," and "know as we are known"; when the mists of this world will be swept away, when we shall see the amazing spirituality of the universe, which is so delicately adjusted that "the fragrance of the rose troubles the star"; when we shall have come to understand that the cosmos is not a dead, lifeless uniformity, but a vast organism, a vitalized entity,

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alive from atom to angel. How long has "the very dust" been alive? If dust has perplexed us for so long a time, is it not reasonable to suppose that spirit may continue to puzzle us for some time to come?

The third question upon which this matter of the supernatural hinges is:

3. *Was the occasion of sufficient importance to justify God's intervention?*

In other words, was there a moral reason for the appearance of this angel? Not, did the angel appear, or did he not appear, so as to fit in with your theory or mine; but was there a sufficient reason for his appearance? If there was, it is possible that he might have appeared without asking any permission from that arrogant supersensitive ghost called "modern mind." Surely there is reason enough. The hour of God's providence had come. For four hundred years the voice of prophecy had been dead in the land. The angel appears to Zacharias announcing the birth of John the Baptist. He also now appears to Mary announcing the coming Redeemer. God's purpose had struck. The time was ripe. His providence and His salvation are about to manifest themselves. His eternal plan is about to unfold, and to move on toward completion. Surely this is cause enough to bring from Heaven the special messenger of God himself, to break this glad news to the weary heart of sin-sick men.

B

The supernatural, in this picture, is manifested also in the announcement which the angel makes, namely, the *virgin birth.*

Of course the virgin birth is a mystery. Every birth is no less a mystery. "Thou knowest not how

the bones grow in the womb of her that is with child." (Ecclesiasties 11:5.) There is the most amazing mystery in ordinary generation. Of course it is because it is unique that the matter of our Lord's birth excites incredulity. A careful study of Romans 5:15-17, I Corinthians 16:21, 22, 45-49, will be profitable. The apostle is drawing his antithesis between the first and the second Adam. The first Adam was the head of the race, created innocent, with the intention that he should maintain his innocence by steadfast obedience, and gather strength and wisdom. Thus by the inscrutable law of heredity he would have transmitted his moral and intellectual gain to his descendents, and would have advanced the progress of the race toward the realization of its divine ideal. He failed, and by the same law, his sin, in its consequences, was the heritage of his descendents. The stream was polluted at its source, and it must be cleansed there. It was necessary for the race to find a new head, and this was provided by the incarnation of the Eternal Son of God, the divine image in which man had been created, the second Adam, the new head of the race. (Genesis 1:26, 27; Colossians 3:10.) There flowed out from the first Adam, down the generations, a poisoned stream. There flows out from the second Adam a stream of healing. "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ, shall all be made alive."*

Christ was not begotten *of* Mary, but *in* Mary; of the Holy Spirit; and derived from her no heredi-

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*Read "A Scientist's Viewpoint of the Virgin Birth" by Harry Rimmer—pages 7 to 14. Read this book also for a fascinating account of the miraculous element in an ordinary birth.

tary taint. He was a fresh creation, direct from the Divine Hand. The first Adam was the creation of the Holy Spirit. So was also the humanity with which God clothed the Eternal Son in the days of His flesh. It was not generated; it was created; and the womb of the virgin was but only the nidus where the Holy Thing begotten in her "was cherished and nurtured."

From the standpoint of pure science, not only is the virgin birth scientific, but *any other* explanation of the emergence of Christ is *utterly unscientific. If we grant the sinlessness* of the Master, then we are bound up to some such explanation as the virgin birth, to account for His appearance upon the boards of time. To explain the emergence of *the only sinless* personality the world has ever seen, in *exactly the same terms* in which the emergence of ordinary personalities is explained, is utterly unscientific. It is never scientific to explain extraordinary results by merely ordinary causes. If the universe is orderly at all, a life like Christ's calls for some larger explanation than a lesser life will require. It does not bear upon the matter to say that other lives have been explained by similar causes. Did those lives call for any special explanation? Did they move in regions where ordinary effects do not move? If men over-estimated a life which did not need such an explanation, shall it be denied when a fair estimate of a life does call for it?

In the midst of the question as to how the idea of the virgin birth of Christ arose, one very important possibility is often overlooked. Did not the idea arise because the fact occurred? This would seem a natural origin for it. The virgin birth of Christ is a logical beginning for such a life as followed. Multitudes of people believed in Christ before they

knew this story of His birth. It was He, Himself, upon whom they believed. It is striking, however, that when the story did become known, they found in it nothing to trouble them, once they had come to see Him as He was. There is no evidence whatsoever that the story originated in the effort to explain Him. It arose among the people who had no tendency to fall back on that kind of explanation. The virgin birth is a way of telling humanity that God has entered human history in personal, incarnate form. Jesus is not a man risen to immense height. He is God stooping to an immense depth. Here is the supernatural in the account of the birth—the virgin birth.

Here is

## IV

## REVERENT MEDITATION

Notice the open Bible on the knee of the virgin. It was while she was engaged in study of God's word that the glorious announcement came to her. Was she reading the ancient book of Psalms or was she studying the prophecies of great leaders of her people? Of course we do not know. But it is a beautiful way which the artist has, of reminding us that the wonderful things of life and of revelation come to us as we study and ponder God's Word. The sad thing about our modern life is that so many of us refuse to spend the proper amount of time in a search and study, diligent and reverent, of God's Word. No experience can come to us in this life of so unusual and trying a nature, but we shall find in God's Word, that which will guide and comfort and strengthen us.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105.)

"I walk in the darkness, unseeing
The perils that compass me 'round;
The frowning rock-masses above me,
The depths that no plummet can sound;
Yet surely I tread, all unfearing
The traps and the dangers I meet;
I pass all the pitfalls in safety;
Thy word is a lamp to my feet."

"The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Eph. 6:17.)

"I walk amid strife, all unknowing
What foes I shall find on my way,
What forces are lurking in ambush,
Or marshalled in battle array;
Yet never I fear for the outcome,
Whatever my strength must withstand,
And, steadfast, press on to the conflict;
Thy word is a sword in my hand."

"How sweet are Thy words unto my taste!" (Psalm 119:103).

"I walk through a wilderness barren—
This world is a desert indeed;
It offers no bread for my hunger,
No waters to flow for my need;
And yet on fine wheat I am nourished;
Unfailing, Thy deep rivers roll;
I feast on the honeycomb's sweetness;
Thy word is the food of my soul."

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee." (Psalm 119:11.)

"I walk in the midst of temptations;
By evil my path is beset;
The good that I would, that I do not;
The flesh holds some mastery yet;
But its power shall not overcome me;
Thy precepts new faith shall impart;
I fear not the wiles of the tempter;
Thy word have I hid in my heart."

We should allow the words of Holy Scripture to steal into our hearts. We should commit portions of God's Word by memory, that in the quiet watches of the night when sleep is far from us, they may come with all of their tender and comforting ministry into mind and heart.

The Bible is a strange, unfamiliar and unattractive book to many because it is not reverently read and earnestly studied. It yields its wonderful fragrance, and gives its lovely fruit only to the diligent and reverent seeker. Through it we come into intimate communion with Christ.

One of the most exquisite statues of Christ, is the one in white marble, which stands in the hallway, just inside the entrance of the great Johns Hopkins Hospital, in the beautiful city of Baltimore. No one whose life the Man of Galilee has ever touched, can look upon this statue without being profoundly stirred.

Upon the base of the monument are chiseled the words which fell from His blessed lips. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The nail-pierced hands are out-stretched invitingly. And the face! It is a face of tender patience, such as Sarto gave the Master in the Church of the Annunziata, full of compassion and benign yearning. And it puts a richness into the words, that causes hundreds of poor, pain-

racked patients to shed tears and take hope as they are carried through the door, and past the wonderful statue.

One day, it is said, there came a cynic and a doubter, to view the figure of which he had heard so much. It was very evident he was disappointed. He walked around from side to side and looked at it from nearly every angle, and was about to go away. But there was standing by, a little girl who had watched the man with childish curiosity and something of concern, and when she saw him about to leave without having read the real message of it all, she ran up to him and said, "Oh, sir, you cannot see Him that way. You must get very close, and fall upon your knees and look up!" Neither the Christ nor the Bible which reveals Him, yield their riches to the flippant or the curious or the careless, but only to the reverent and the earnest. We must "come very close; fall upon our knees and look up."

And here, finally, is

## V.

## THE LOVELINESS OF NATURE

In the picture, the artist has given us a glimpse of his love of the natural world.

Outside the loggia, in which the virgin sits, is a garden; and such a garden!—full of the loveliest flowers, roses, red and white, and marguerites and pinks and jonquils and orchids.

It is very obvious that the Friar had made careful studies from nature before making his garden. There is the red pink, in three stages of its development: in bud, half-open, and full blown. It is a lovely touch, and one that was quite new to the time. Many people were excluding themselves from the beauties of nature, fearful that it would detract

from their thought of God, and love for Him! They had the absurd attitude of that early traveler down the Rhine, who withdrew to the hold of the boat and, when questioned about his action, replied that the scenery was so lovely that he was afraid to look upon it, for fear it might make him forget God! How grateful we should be, that in our time we have come to understand that God speaks to us through the beauties of nature in as sure and true a way as He speaks to us in Holy Writ. Maltbie D. Babcock, in one of his loveliest poems, has expressed the attitude and thought which should be ours, in connection with all of the beauties of nature.

"This is my Father's world;
And to my listening ears
All nature sings and round me rings,
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world;
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks, and trees, of skies and seas,
His hand the wonders wrought.

"This is my Father's world;
The birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white,
Declare their Maker's praise.
This is my Father's world,
He shines in all that's fair,
In the rustling grass I hear him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.

"This is my Father's world.
Oh, let me ne'er forget,
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.

This is my Father's world,
The battle is not done,
Jesus who died shall be satisfied,
And earth and heaven be one."

Psalm 19:1-6 expresses the same thought. The reverent soul can find inspiration and helpfulness in every manifestation of nature's beauty. The artist is perfectly logical and right in connecting here the most important announcement ever made to man, with the most gorgeous natural beauties in the surrounding world.

## Sermon IV

### "THE ARRIVAL OF THE SHEPHERDS"

(From the Painting by Lerolle)

Scripture Lesson: *Luke 2:8-20.*

Text: *Luke 2:16.* "And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger."

*The Artist.*

Henri Lerolle was born in Paris in 1848. He is still living. He was one of the few artists who were economically independent, and so was able to work entirely to please himself, instead of patrons. He has worked in a seclusion which has retarded his recognition by the world in general. As a lad he demonstrated unusual interest in art and was encouraged by his parents. While still in his teens, he became a pupil of Lamothe. After studying under him for two years, he made his debut at the Paris Salon in 1858. His entries were "Does in the Forest," and "Kitchen Utensils." Neither was considered exceptional, but manifested his ability to deal with natural objects in a simple and natural way. Lerolle lived at the time when Naturalism was coming into its own. Everything from the drawing room to the gutter was to be painted in its natural habitat and form. At first the movement manifested offensive traits. The restraint of its exaggerations and extravagances is due in large part to Lerolle. He gave it form and symmetry and beauty.

Most of his religious pictures were painted after the year 1874. This "Arrival of the Shepherds"

was exhibited in 1883 and is perhaps, his most famous picture.

His most beautiful landscape pictures are those which represent the evening light. His technique is extremely modern and personal. His touch is skilled and sure, and his color is pleasing and carefully studied. His technique of chiaroscuro is good. His pictures have atmosphere which can be felt. In later years he developed a fondness for airy interiors of large dimension, in which he employs the diffuse daylight of his earlier landscapes, and places his figures in the clear luminous silver of it.

*The Picture.*

Lerolle has given us here, one of the most appealing of the great Bible stories. He has sought to depict that moment when the shepherds enter the stable and "find Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." The donkey, upon which Mary has ridden to the city, stands in the foreground, with head raised, looking inquiringly at the visitors. He has been drinking from a trough. One of the oxen is seen, lying beyond the mother and child, while in the extreme background, and beyond the pile of hay, is just discernible the upper part of the body of another reclining ox. In this picture, Lerolle manifests, in a remarkable degree, his mastery of the art of the diffusion of light.

*What Is in the Picture?*

Here is

I

PROVIDENCE

His providence is revealed in two ways:

(a) By the Inn itself.

A fascinating pursuit for the Bible student is to trace the history of this caravansary, in which the

Christ was born. Lerolle has given us here the picture of the interior of the stable. In II Samuel 19: 31,—following, we have the story of Barzillai. He is a very old man and renders extreme service, in the most courteous and affectionate manner, to the fleeing King David. As reward for this service, David reimburses him for the expense to which he had been put, and cordially invites him to go to the capitol city after the successful quelling of Absalom's revolt. Barzillai, with sound good sense, declines the gracious invitation, in the most courteous manner; calls attention to his extreme age; and recommends that his son, Chimham, be permitted to accompany the King. Chimham does so. It is an interesting fact that this venture of Chimham, as he passed over Jordan and on to Jerusalem, saved the family of Barzillai from extinction. Within two or three generations the Assyrians swept over the land of Gilead, and the ten tribes of Israel passed into oblivion, but, as we learn from the book of Ezra, four hundred years later, children of Chimham survived, and came back with the exiles, to relay the foundation of the commonwealth of God.

King David gave Chimham an inheritance close by his native town of Bethlehem, and there, by the side of the road leading down into Egypt, Chimham built a hostel; built it firm and strong—an inn for the shelter of weary travellers. In the Orient, changes come very slowly. It should not surprise us to learn that four hundred years later when Jerusalem had become a ruin, refugees, in the time of Jeremiah, driven to seek asylum in Egypt, sojourned for a season at the "Inn of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem." (Jeremiah 41:17.) It is not a wild flight of fancy to suppose that the "Chimham Geruth" was the inn of Bethlehem in whose stable

the Lord of glory was "wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger." So in strange ways, God's providence makes itself known.

The providence of God is clear again,

(b) By the shepherds.

God revealed to these simple shepherds what was hidden from the wise and the great.

At the very time this birth was taking place, Caesar Augustus sat in his gilded palace, the master of the world. He little dreamed, that far away, in despised Judea, a King was being born, whose name would be continued as long as the sun, and whose dominion would extend from sea to sea, when Rome's empire had perished, and her glory had become a memory of the past. In His providence, God saw wise to conceal these things from the mighty of the world, but to reveal them to the simple shepherds around Bethlehem, who lay on the pasture land, tending their flocks.

Bethlehem means "House of Bread."

Here at the "House of Bread," was born one who was to be, through all generations, the Bread of Life.

These shepherds were lying where, years before, David had shepherded his father's sheep.

Here was born the Son of David, the Infinite Shepherd.

They were lying where Ruth had gleaned in the field of Boaz.

Here was born the Great Gleaner of the Universe who gathers into His tender arms a harvest of souls!

They were lying where Amos had driven his herds, and dressed his sycamores; where had surged through his heart, a great tide of indignation at the wrongs of the poor. Here, in fiery elo-

quence, he had denounced the arrogance of the rich, and had pleaded the cause of the needy.

Here was born the greatest Friend the poor of this world have ever known.

They were near the place where was the well of Bethlehem, from whose sweet water David had longed to drink.

Here was born One who was to be the Fountain of Water of Life to all thirsty souls.

They were lying not far from the tomb of Rachel, who had died in giving birth to Benjamin.

Here was born One, who, in His death, was to open the way to new birth to multitudes of believing souls.

Surely here is the providence of God.

Bethlehem is the finest site in the entire territory. It is a most fertile district. The pasture lands slope off gently to the plain. The town itself lies on a ridge of gray limestone, about a mile in length. Its narrow streets, two thousand, five hundred and thirty-eight feet above the Mediterranean, look out over a sea of hills, bare and rocky. On the east, the mountains of Moab rise against the horizon like a purple wall. On the north, the hills descend with sweeping terraces to the lower valley. These terraces are like gigantic steps, and in former days, bore tier on tier of fig trees, olives, pomegranite, and vines. Close under the town, and to the eastward, is a little plain, remarkably rich, a little brook murmuring through it.

Christmas in Bethlehem is a long-drawn-out affair. The Latin ceremonies are held on the twenty-fifth of December, our Christmas Day. Fourteen days later the Greeks, who still adhere to the old calendar, hold their services. Thirteen days later,

the Armenian services are held. All of these functions take place in the Church of the Nativity.

Those shepherds were a brave and hardy and somewhat lawless race. Their calling figures honorably in the holy Scripture, but in latter days had fallen into some disrepute. "Let no man," went one Proverb, "make his son a muleteer, a camel driver, a barber, a tailor, a shepherd, or an innkeeper; inasmuch as their class is a class of robbers." And yet it was to a company of these lowly and despised shepherds that the first announcement of the Lord's birth was made. And it was a lowly shepherd, Caedmon, who first set down in Anglo-Saxon, the words of Holy Writ. (680 A. D.) Surely, "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform."

They were reclining under the starry sky, whiling away the hours of vigil with flute and song, when suddenly, from one of the galleries of the sky, a chant broke out. It was in the still hours of the night, the open country was the auditorium, and this group of frightened shepherds the only auditors.

It is a fact often overlooked, that many of the world's best helpers have had barn-like birthplaces.

Lloyd George was born in a rude hut in the backwoods of Wales.

Lincoln was cradled in a log cabin in the wilderness. "The angels said, 'let us hide Abraham Lincoln where the world will never find him.' They hid that great, big, kind, generous, humanitarian, God-fearing, lank, homely, gaunt, ungainly, cadaverous body; they bronzed his cheeks until he looked like an Indian; they hardened his hands with toil. They never knew how it happened, but they could not keep him any longer, and one morning, this sleepy,

dreamy, drowsy old world crawled out of bed, rubbed its eyes and started on a still hunt for a great man. It struck a new scent and a new trail that led out through the woods, to a log cabin in the wilderness on the hill, among the trees. The world walked up and rapped on the door. Abraham Lincoln arose; so big, so high, so manly, so tall, that the roof fell off, and the logs rolled down. He stepped forth a giant among men, where he towered above all human competitors."

Moses saw the light in a slave hut on the Nile.

Christ was born in a bare barn! And from there He stepped forth to win men's hearts!

He has done so.

What name is mightiest today? Jesus! Who has more friends on earth than any other? Jesus! Who has conquered more hearts than all the generals and admirals, the armies and navies of the world? Jesus! Before whom do millions kneel in devout worship this hour in chapel, church, and cathedral, in city and country, in town and wilderness? Jesus! Men take encouragement from the stories of the birth of Lloyd George, of Lincoln and of Moses, but who can measure or describe the sweet silvery stream of glad encouragement that comes to the hearts of those who are friendless and unknown, when they stand at the manger cradle? "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God." Here indeed is God's providence.

But here also is

## II

## POWER

Lerolle intended it to be understood that the light in this picture comes from the shining of the star

of Bethlehem, the star which at that very hour was leading the wise men, and standing over the place where the Christ lay. The shepherds, to be sure, were not dependent upon this star because they were nearby. They had the announcement from the angel to inform and guide them. But as they enter the barn, they find the place suffused with a soft, glowing light, which comes from the radiance of the star. Surely this star manifests the power of our God. Lerolle intended that this light in the picture should be a testimony to that power.

The older interpretation of the star made it either a passing meteor, or a strictly miraculous phenomenon, which lies beyond astronomical calculation, and was perhaps visible to the Magi alone. But God usually works through natural agencies, and that God did so in this case is made at least very probable by a remarkable discovery in astronomy. The great and devout Kepler observed in the years 1603 and 1604 a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, which was made more rare and luminous by the addition of Mars in the month of March, 1604. In the autumn of the same year (October 10) he observed near the planets Saturn, Jupiter and Mars, a new (fixed) star of uncommon brilliancy, which appeared "in triumphal pomp, like some all-powerful monarch on a visit to the metropolis of his realm." It was blazing and glittering "like the most beautiful and glorious torch ever seen, when driven by a strong wind," and seemed to him to be "an exceedingly wonderful work of God." His genius perceived that this phenomenon might lead to the determination of the year of Christ's birth, and by careful calculation he ascertained that a similar conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, with the later addition of Mars, and probably some extraordinary

star, took place repeatedly A. U. 747 and 748, in the sign of Pisces, and he connected it with the advent of the Messiah.

The discovery of Kepler was almost forgotten until the nineteenth century, when it was independently confirmed by several eminent astronomers, Schubert of Petersburg, Ideler and Encke of Berlin, and Pritchard of London. It is pronounced by Pritchard to be "as certain as any celestial phenomenon of ancient date." It certainly makes the pilgrimage of the Magi of Jerusalem and Bethlehem more intelligible.

Here is

## III

## TRUTH

Notice that this is a stable—a real stable, dirty, unattractive. It is not a bright, airy portico which some Christian painters have created for the son of David, as if ashamed that their God should lie down in poverty and dirt! It is not the modern Christmas-Eve-Holy Stable, made of plaster of paris,—with little candy-like statuettes,—clean and prettily painted, with a neat, tidy manger, an ecstatic ass, a contrite ox, and angels fluttering their wreaths on the roofs;—such is not the stable where Jesus was born. Lerolle, here, has given us a *real* stable,—a prison of the animals who work for man. It is a poor old stable, of Christ's old poor country; with four rough walls, a cave with dirty pavement, a roof of earth and slate, from which even in the picture the dust and earth can be seen, dropping. It is dark and reeking. The only clean things in it are the piles of hay and fodder.

Here is truth,—the shepherds are natural men, —rough—unwashed, uncouth, like those which Bas-

tian Lepage has pictured receiving the annunciation. There is none of the fine perfection of curly heads and manicured hands which some artists represent. They are coarse, uncultured men, with horny hands and scant rough clothing. The ass is natural. The ox is natural. The straw, the pillars, the dirt and the dogs are all natural. Here is truth, a plain and dramatic setting forth of the actual conditions of our Saviour's birth. We have glorified it, and set a halo about it, and the subsequent history of the church, especially that part of the history connected with our Saviour's birth, has been distorted and so represented as to make it almost impossible for us now, at this late date, to penetrate through the mass of accretion, and lay hold upon the real facts of His actual birth.

We have forgotten the old rough dirty stable. The place is now covered with a magnificent church, spacious and handsome, with wonderful columns, a great central nave, amid aisles with forty-eight tall, corinthian, monolith pillars of marble, each one of which is two and one-half feet in diameter, and seventeen feet high. There is no ceiling in this wonderful building. The lofty roof is exposed to view, composed of the cedars of Lebanon, still in fine preservation, and affording a remarkable specimen of the architecture of an early age. This great hall forms the main part of the cross made up by the entire church building: the other portions of the church, forming the arms, are walled up. In the crypt of this Church of the Nativity, by the side of what he believed to be the cradle of the Christian faith, St. Jerome lived for more than thirty years, leaving a lasting monument of his sojourn in the Vulgate Translation of the Bible. In the grotto, under the Church of the Nativity, reached

by two spiral staircases, leading from the hall of the church down to the nave, we see what is purported to be the birth-place of Christ. All traces of actuality, which we see in Lerolle's picture have been removed from this magnificent grotto. It lies twenty feet below the level of the church. The walls of the cave are covered with costly tapestry, and from the ceiling hang lamps of gold and silver, which light the sacred precinct. A silver star marks the supposed exact spot where the Saviour was born, and corresponds to that star in the firmament which gave notice of that great event. Here, hewn out of the rock, is shown the manger in which our Saviour was supposed to have been placed immediately after his birth! To such absurd extremes has the imagination of men gone. While this spot was fixed upon in an early date, there is not the slightest bit of actual evidence that the birth of Christ occurred here. If it did occur here, all trace of the original circumstances which surrounded the birth, have been effaced. In this picture by Lerolle, however, we have, at least, a very vivid representation of those actual facts. No lamps, no gold, no silver, no tapestries;—but dirt, squalor, poverty, and the hard circumstances of emergency, and of necessity.

Christ was born in a stable, in order that He might be near men. Is it not a fact that most men are born in places more nearly resembling stables than palaces? Christ, had he chosen, might have made entrance into the world through a gorgeous palace, but the Son of Man,—the Great Companion of men—desired to come on a plane that would make Him nearer the ordinary human being.

The shepherds are shown in summer attire. *Christ was certainly born in the summer time,* since the shepherds were out in the wilderness of Judea

with their flocks, and the season for pasturing in the open extended from the Passover until October. (Luke 2:8.) Moreover, we have evidence which is even more convincing. Zachariah, the Baptist's father, (Luke 1:5) belonged to the course of Abijah, the eighth of the twenty-four priestly relays that ministered in rotation for a week, reckoned from Sabbath to Sabbath. (I Chronicles 24: 1-19.) At that period the eight courses,—"days of ministrations," fell about the third week in May. It was at that time that the promise of a son came to Zachariah, and Elizabeth conceived after his return home, in the beginning of June. (Luke 1:24, 25, 36.) It was the ensuing November that Mary conceived; and so it would be in August that "she brought forth her first born son." The birth of John the Baptist occurred in March 5 B. C. *The birth of our Lord occurred in August 5 B. C.*, and the flight into Egypt occurred in October of the same year. The return to Nazareth occurred in October 4 B. C.

Christmas, as we observe it, on the 25th of December, dates only as far back as the 4th century A. D. It was introduced at that time in imitation of some of the pagan celebrations, such as Saturnalia, Juvenalie, Brumalie, etc. These Roman celebrations are held the latter part of December, in commemoration of the golden age of liberty and equality, and in honor of the sun who, in the winter solstice, is, as it were, born anew, and begins his conquering march.

Here is

## IV

## PROTECTION

Joseph starts to rise from his seat upon the straw as these strangers enter. The artist shows him to

advantage. A man older than Mary, rugged and somewhat stolid, he was called, "Joseph, the Just." How we love him! He was the defender and protector of the Child and its mother. What hours of distress he experienced before the angel revealed to him the fact! How tenderly he planned for and protected mother and child!

William E. Barton, in his little booklet, "Four Hitherto Unpublished Gospels" puts these words into the mouth of James, the brother of our Lord. "My father, Joseph, was a carpenter by trade, and that is an honourable calling, but he was much more than a carpenter. He was a high-minded gentleman, capable and resolute. He was sometimes called, 'The Just,' and I count it a high honor that some have applied this term to me, his son. I have heard the story of how he took my mother and her first-born Son to Egypt, thereby defeating the efforts of the king to destroy the Child. Few men would have shown such resolution; such capacity for swift and accurate judgment; such ability to provide support for himself and his family in a foreign country, and through all the following years; such nobility of soul, that the boyhood memory of Jesus gave colour to His thinking when He taught men to pray to God and call Him, 'Our Father.' There is a story gaining some currency that Joseph was her protector, but never really her husband, and that we children, other than Jesus, were the children of a previous marriage. That is not true. He was but little older than my mother, and of a suitable age to be her lover and her husband. Their life together was one of mutual confidence and affection."

Tradition says that Joseph and Mary and the child resided at Cairo in Egypt during their year of ex-

ile there. There is still pointed out in that town, the traditional site where they had their residence.

Here is

## V

## DEITY

The light of the star is not the only light in the stable. A close examination reveals a halo of light about the child and about the mother. By this, Lerolle intends to symbolize the touch of God upon them. It is *His Son* who has been born!

In the prologue of his gospel, St. John calls Him, "the Word," Who "in the beginning, was with God, and was God; through Whom all things were made, in Whom was life, and the life was the light of men." "And the word was made flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory." Paul, although in simpler language, advances an equally tremendous claim. He affirms the pre-existence of Jesus. We should remember also that this affirmation was made only a generation after Jesus had departed, and while many who had been with Him in the days of His flesh still survived. Paul evidently assumes that this is already an article of faith which his readers would never dream of disputing. (II Corinthians 8:9 and Philippians 2: 5-7.) This is a marvelous thing. What manner of being must Jesus have been, when the men who companied with Him in the days of His flesh, who saw Him eating and drinking, who knew Him in all of the intimacies of daily intercourse, could thus think and speak of Him? It is difficult to conceive how they could make so transcendent a claim in His behalf, had He not Himself advanced it, and had not His whole life been such as to bear testimony to the truth of His assertion. This fact is exactly

contrary to the ordinary experience of common man. Usually it is those who are *at a distance* who know us only slightly, who ascribe to us great power. "An expert is a man a long way from home." Those who live with us day by day, know most intimately our foibles and weaknesses. But in the case of Jesus Christ, it *was the men who lived with Him day after day, in the closest kind of every-day association, who were most convinced that He was more than human,* that He was God. It is significant to recall that the first heresy that troubled the church was a denial of His humanity. Those who were closest to Him could believe Him God more easily than they could believe Him man.

Here in this picture, Lerolle is giving us the incarnation of One Who had been "from all eternity in the bosom of the Father." The mother and child are seated away from the incoming light of the star. They are in what would be deep shadow, were it not for the inherent radiance which shines from personality. Here is Deity.

Lerolle is a devout Christian, and in this picture he bears testimony to his full belief in the Deity of Jesus Christ.

Here is

## VI

## WORSHIP

Notice that one man kneels, one man raises his hand in awe, one man stands in tiptoe wonder, while another gazes with steadfast attention.

It is a demonstration of the way in which different types and temperaments respond to the same stimulus. They are all worshipping; but they are worshipping each one in his own distinctive way.

Two boys return after a long absence from home, to visit their mother. One is so happy that he sits for one hour, and says not a word. The other is so happy that he begins to talk, and for two hours no one else can get in a word. Which boy is happiest at seeing home and mother? Of course the question answers itself. They are both happy,—as happy as they *can* be. It means simply, that they are *different* boys, having different temperaments. Men express themselves in different ways in worship. Some like dignity; some prefer vocalization and emotion. Some like form; others dislike it. Some are deeply emotional. Others are deeply intellectual; while still others are intensely practical. Some worship in one way; others in an entirely different way; but it is all perfectly true and perfectly legitimate, perfectly sincere and perfectly acceptable to Christ.

I go frequently to speak in one of the Chicago missions, the superintendent of which is an earnest member of the Methodist church. Again and again he and I have stood, and have seen the moving of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of men. I have looked at him, and have seen tears in his eyes, and have heard the broken words of gratitude from his lips. Meanwhile my heart was as deeply stirred as his, but without any external manifestation. Who shall say which of us was the more deeply stirred, or the more profoundly glad for the power of God which we were witnessing? It is simply the reaction of two different temperaments to the situation. Some people are more demonstrative than others.

The different denominations with their varying forms and customs give opportunity to different

temperaments and types of personality to adequately and effectively express themselves.

The time will come, no doubt, when we shall have a large measure of church union in this country; but I trust that the time will never come when we will be merged in one rigid group, having exactly the same methods; expressing ourselves in precisely the same ways; submerging our different personalities and temperaments under one inflexible system of conformity.

The stately pageantry of the Episcopalians; the social passion and emotionalism of the Methodists; the dignity and intellectual vigor of the Presbyterians; the moral courage and simplicity of the Quakers; the fine democracy of the Congregationalists, the heroic steadfastness of the Lutherans,—all are too valuable to lose, all are worthy, acceptable to God, and legitimate. They advance His Kingdom. For men differ in their very constitution.

Personality is so valuable, so spiritual, so subtle a fact, and faith is so dominant, so vital, so transforming a fact, that, brought together, they must be permitted to express the result in a full, free and natural way. They must not be forced into a harsh, rigid, external mold of conformity. To attempt to do so is to kill one or both of them.

Lerolle is telling us that the *fact* of Christ impels men to worship; but that they worship in *different* ways.

Do you worship? Do you approach Him with reverence and expectancy? Do you come into the church, and lay open your heart with all of its aspiration and with all of its need, in confidence and in faith before Him? Do you sing the songs mechanically, or do you seek to make them the real expression of your heart's desire? Do you enter

fully into every phase of the worship? Are there windows in your soul? Do you come to the church and go away empty-hearted, or do you come with such faith and hope and with such expectancy, and preparation, that you receive the blessing and benediction of God? The services of the church are effectual only as we attend thereunto with *diligence,* (John 5:39; Luke 10:26; Matthew 22:29; Acts 17:11, 12) *preparation,* (James 1:21; Luke 8:17; I Peter 2:1, 2) and *prayer,* (Psalm 119:5, 18, 33-37.) We must receive God's message with *faith* (I Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 4:2) and *love,* (Psalm 119:97, 103; Psalm 112:1) lay it up in our hearts, (Psalm 119:11, 15) and practice it in our lives, (Psalm 119:1-3; James 1:22, 25.) Many a church service falls dead through no fault whatever of the service, but through a great fault on the part of those who participate. They are not prepared. They are not attending thereunto, with diligence, preparation and prayer. They do not lay it up in their hearts. And they fail utterly to practice it in their lives!

## Sermon V

## "THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT"

(From the Painting by Hofmann)

Scripture Lesson: *Matthew 5:1-14.*

Text: *Matthew 5:1, 2.* And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down his disciples came unto him; and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,"

*The Artist.*

The reader is referred to the sermon on "The Christ" for a discussion of the artist's life and work.

*The Picture.*

This picture shows the artist's familiarity with the general characteristics of the Palestinian landscapes. Christ stands upon the mountain overlooking the Sea of Galilee. It is just such a scene as those who are familiar with that territory would expect. The mountains in the distance; the calm, untroubled waters of the Sea of Galilee; the people in their characteristic attitude and need.

This is one of the few pictures in which Hofmann gathers together a considerable group of people. He seldom has more than three or four characters on his canvas. The canvas was painted near the middle part of his most productive period, and manifests his technical skill in a very clear way. The draping of the Master's garments, the fine texture of the hair, the realistic bandage on the foot of the man who sits in the foreground, the shading on the face of the blind beggar, the character delineation on the countenances of the young people,—all of these things testify to the artistic ability and consummate

skill of the painter. Hofmann is at his best in depicting scenes of the life of Christ.

This sermon was delivered upon what is known as the "Horns of Hattin," or the "Mount of Beatitudes." It is a low, square-shaped hill, about seven miles southwest of Capernaum. As one goes down from Nazareth to Capernaum, over the two broad moors now known as the Plateau of Shaara and the Sahel-el-Ahma, down, across the gray, limestone ridges of lower Galilee to the cliff overlooking the lake, one passes by this traditional mount. Lava and pumice-stone are in evidence. There are practically no trees upon the place now. After rain has fallen the shadeless streams very soon run dry, and the summer grass and bush crackle to tinder. History and legend know these barren moors only as the scene of strife and thirst and exhaustion. Across the southern end, Sisera fled and sought drink for his parched throat in the tent of Jael. (Judges 4:17.) It was here within sight of this hill, that the courage of Christendom was scorched to the heart, so as never to rally in all the East again. The Crusaders here fought against Saladin. A blistering July night, without water, was followed by a scorching day. (July 5, 1187.) To add to the horrors of the situation, the forces of Saladin set fire to the stubble. The smoke swept the feverish Christians into a panic. Knights choked in their hot armor. The blinded foot-soldiers broke their ranks, dropped their weapons, and were ridden down in mobs by the Moslem cavalry. Groups of brave men here and there, fought sun and fire and sword, far into the terrible afternoon, but the defeat was utter and overwhelming. Thus a militant and decadent Christianity, as false as the relics of the "True Cross" around which it was rallied, met its humiliat-

ing end within view of the scene where Christ had proclaimed the gospel of peace, and had given enunciation to these timeless and eternal truths which made up the Sermon on the Mount. The irony of it! The plain, inescapable teaching of it, are too evident to require words.

*What Is in the Picture?*

Here is

## I

## ORIGINALITY

It is sometimes said that Christ gave utterance to no new truth. It is declared that He only revived, and gave new emphasis to old truths uttered long before. Christ *did* reiterate and emphasize many things that had been said before. For instance, His saying, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye also even unto them," is simply putting into affirmative way, what, long ago, Confucius taught in the negative way, when he said, "Do not unto others what ye would not that they should do unto you." He declared that He came to "fulfil the law and the prophets."

However, Christ *was* keenly original. He gave utterance to truths which never before had flashed upon the consciousness of these people, or upon that of the people of the world. His undiscourageable good will, His teaching of consideration and sympathy, the broadness of His outreaching love,—all of these things flashed upon the spirits of these narrow, bigoted, and intellectually circumscribed Jews, as a strange new meteor flashing through the heavens.

The originality of the Saviour in His teachings is made beautifully evident when one considers His words carefully. There are those to whom the

prizes for which the majority strive are as dross. The race for wealth, the pride of life, the distinctions of society, these people laugh at and despise. But the golden page from a favorite poet; a thought, newly minted in the glowing heat of a true thinker's mind; a pregnant word which sets one's fancy ranging through eternity; a luminous doctrine that rises on one's intellectual horizon like a star,—these are their wealth. In the words and teachings of Christ, all such people find room for their deepest spiritual powers; inspiration for the farthest flight of their heaven-born fancy.

Jesus Christ was amazingly original in the sheer simplicity, and the simple power of His teaching. Consider the great teachers of history. Plato has to divide honors with Aristotle. Shakespeare and Browning are rivals for the admiration of the poet lovers; and Napoleon does not hold the field alone in the admiration of the soldiers. In music, art, literature, there is no such a thing as unrivaled supremacy! But Jesus Christ is so opulent in His gifts, so transcendent in His words and His works, so unique in His life and in His death that all people and all ages pronounce *Him supreme.*

Consider, moreover, His originality, as revealed by the course of His teaching. Every other teacher that this world has ever seen, has started with sayings of mediocre brilliance and effectiveness, and through the years, has increased in power. This has been the universal and natural process, due to increasing experience and study. What teacher is there who teaches as well and as effectively the first year of his professional life as the twentieth? What minister is there who sways vast audiences, and sweeps souls into the kingdom as easily and as consistently the first year of his ministry as the

twentieth? What reformer is there who utters words of solemn truth, as profound and as effective the first year of his work as the twentieth?

But what of Christ?

From the day when He strode into the Temple at Jerusalem and drove the money changers out, saying,— "My house shall be called a House of Prayer," until He cried—"It is finished,"—His teaching was of uniform and matchless purity and effectiveness. There was no great development in His teaching life. It sprang at the fount of purity and lucidity and was characterized thereby *all of His teaching life.* Plato recognized his debt to Aristotle, saying—"Much of my teaching is derived from my master Aristotle;" Christ recognized no master. He walked among men and taught as one having authority. And men trembled, and wondered at His words.

But there is still another striking proof of His originality.

It is the brevity of His teaching life and the tremendous amount accomplished therein.

Isaiah lived sixty years and taught forty. Jeremiah also sixty years and taught forty. Hillel—one of the great Rabbis of the Synagogue of the Jews—a liberal in theology—a man whose teaching affected the life of Paul—lived eighty-five years, and taught fifty. Zoroaster lived seventy-five years, and taught forty-five. Kungfutize (Confucius) lived seventy-four years, and taught fifty. Buddha lived eighty years, and taught forty-three. Mohammed lived sixty-two years, and taught twenty-two. Socrates lived seventy-one years, and taught forty. Plato lived eighty years, and taught forty-five. *Jesus lived thirty-three years, and taught three!*

In those three years He summed up all that the other teachers had been trying to say, during all the centuries that had preceded.

He demonstrated His originality through His sheer simplicity as a Teacher. That was, perhaps, the secret, in part, of His great effectiveness. The ears of the world had grown heavy with the weighty, labored, involved arguments of the philosophers. They had dealt in arguments, cumbersome and complex. The simplicity of Jesus charmed the sluggish hearts and the dull ears of men. He rose like a white shaft, simple, dignified and beautiful amid a tangled undergrowth of theories and hypotheses. He spoke simply, and with candor and directness. Each word "flew to the heart of the hearers," and lodged there. The simple Christ! "The Crystal Christ," Lanier calls Him.

For years, teachers had been striving to tell men, that the actions of today reach out their fingers, and lay hold of, and shape the morrow, for good or evil. But they seemed unable to effectively express their thought. Men turned a deaf ear. Then came the Great Teacher, and with vivid, graphic words, He pictured two houses. One, built on the rock, withstood the blast of the wind, and the rush of the waters. The other, built on the sand, fell, "And"—said the Teacher—"great was the fall thereof." There was nothing more to be said on the subject! One could hear the dull thud and roar of the falling house as the picture-words fell from the lips of the Christ. Christ had a style. He was eloquent!

Eloquence is—*a great soul, pouring itself out in words of unsurpassable simplicity.*

Simplicity is a sign of greatness, in every realm. The inventor counts "every additional wheel or crank a lessening of utility. Every gain in simplic-

ity is a gain in power." Among those who are great are the most simple, and their simplicity is their most charming adornment. They need no embellishment or ornamentation. There is no such thing in history as a pretentious hero. If he is pretentious, he does not remain a hero.

Originality consists in *filling old truths with new, vibrant, vivid personality;* in driving them home in convincing way; in bringing them to bear with irresistible pressure upon the minds and consciences of men; in revealing in them new beauty; in giving to them new emphasis; in clothing them with new charm, and compelling force. According to this definition, Christ was the most original Teacher who ever lived. His words rang with truth. They went straight to the heart, with a fiery directness. They were weighted with tenderness. They were freighted with love. They conveyed to the minds and hearts of the hearers, in new and vivid ways, the love of God. They were fragrant with the breath of heaven. They breathed the atmosphere of eternity. He "spoke as one having authority,—and *not as the scribes!*" Delightful scorn!

Here is

## II

## UNIVERSALITY

The teaching of Christ appeals to all ages and to all classes.

The artist has indicated that very beautifully in the picture. Notice the lame man in the immediate foreground. Christ had something to say to him. Just beyond him one sees the miserable, gaunt beggar with his sightless eyes. There is something in the message of Christ which appeals to him. And just beyond him, are four beautiful young faces,—

three of them young women, the fourth a young man, who sits with hands folded across his knee, looking intently into the face of the Saviour. Youth has always been challenged and inspired by the message of Christ.

Behind the young man, is a mother, whose face shows that she is greatly burdened.

Behind her, is a philosophical individual, a man with the look and aspect of the scholar. In the background is seen the soldier, coming on his horse; and the merchant, riding the camel. Behind the three young women, just a part of his face visible,—the eye, a part of the nose, and a part of the mouth showing,—is a middle-aged young man,—an emotional individual. Behind him is a godly old man, a laborer, with a bundle of fagots over his shoulder. He has a kindly look and wears a big hat. At his right hand, is the cynical man; black hair, deep-set, piercing eyes, and heavy black hair. He is harsh worldly, unspiritual,— of the earth, earthy.

At the left hand side of the picture is the compromiser,—a man with a peculiar expression in his eyes, with his hand over his mouth. Behind him, Hofmann has pictured the intensely practical man. Notice the difference in the expression on these two faces.

All of these are gathered together in this group. The success with which the artist has portrayed these various types which he has sought to represent may be judged by the spectator.

The lame and the blind are in evidence on every hand in the Orient. Oriental poverty and degradation, need and suffering, are beyond the comprehension of Occidental people. The sheer human suffering, the pitiful poverty, the almost unbeliev-

able condition in which men and women live, is always amazing to the Occidental visitor.

Christ appeals universally to men and women, to the blind, to the lame, to the young, to the practical, to the emotional, to the philosophical, to the soldier, to the merchant,—to all of these various classes.

The young people Hofmann has shown here in this picture, are eagerly drinking in every word of the Saviour. They look upon Him with upturned faces. They miss no gesture. They scan His face, eager to catch every change of expression and meaning there. These young people are concerned with life. They do not yet know what they are good for and what they are bad for. They are trying to discover themselves and their world. They are seeking to make proper adjustment between themselves and others. They are studying themselves to discover whether they have one talent or five. The young are always supposed to be happy. In actuality, however, they are not always so. They have many problems to face, and in our day, they are carrying a tremendous load of power and of freedom. They are handicapped with more chances for evil in hideously destructive ways of expression than any generation this world has ever seen. It is only at the feet of Christ that the young may find the way, and may learn the road which leads to the Father's house. Christ has a tremendous attraction for young men and women when He is properly presented. He draws them to Himself and holds them in breathless wonder.

Here is the cynic. He is the darkfaced man, on the right hand side of the old laborer.

He is worldly wise. He is sceptical of all these things which the Master is saying. He is interest-

ed only in what he can see and feel; in what he can taste and handle. Truth, as such, has no charm for him. He is callous and hard. He lives only for the present. He believes in laying up for himself treasures upon earth. He is sceptical and impatient at these "lunar politics," to which the Saviour is giving expression. He is the boastful self-made man, of whom it may be said, "God is thereby relieved of a heavy responsibility." His face is hard and stern. He has beaten and buffeted his way through the world, stepping upon others ruthlessly. There is no tenderness in his heart. His whole life has become a failing effort to stimulate his jaded sensations. He seeks only a new "kick" and "thrill." He seeks it in vain. There is no mercy in his soul. He is the cynic! He has not come to learn, but to jeer. He is thoroughly impatient with all the Saviour is saying. He is in almost every congregation. He is disillusioned and self-sufficient. He distrusts others and questions their motives. He sneers at philanthropy, and has no patience with tenderness or sympathy. He dismisses these teachings of Christ with contempt.

Here is the habitual compromiser, on the left, with hand on mouth.

He has formed habits. He has come to an understanding with life. Life has no more adventure for him; he can see the remainder of the dusty road lying straight and even before him. He has ceased to worry about himself. He has come to a working agreement with the world, the flesh and the devil. They are not to interfere with him too much, and he, for his part, will serve them reasonably and with moderation. His whole character is suffering from fatty degeneration. There is a strange look in his eyes. He saves himself trouble. He is a middle-

aged man, in whom character is rapidly deteriorating. The flame flickers; the divine fire burns low; his moral muscles are flabby. He is less and less inclined to fight against anything,—least of all, his own weaknesses. He has attained a certain position in life, and therein lies his peril. He feels that the fight has been won. He has relaxed his vigil. He has dropped his guard. He feels that he is secure, and therefore, he is in a grave position of peril.

Here is the practical man. He shades his eyes to look at Christ. His practicality is shown in every line of his face. He is not vicious. He has a good face. He is not spiritual. He is not entirely worldly. He has some interest in the finer things of life, but he says, "Let others attend the prayer meeting, I will handle the finances." He is in every congregation.

Here is the philosophical man. His face is seen just behind the woman holding the child. The mark of a scholar is on him. He is a student. He has come seeking truth.

Here is the emotional individual. It is said that no place in art is there a more expressive eye, and half a face, and mouth, than Hofmann has shown here. In a brief glimpse of the face an entire character is written. The emotional type is in every congregation.

Here is the good old man. He is preparing for himself a beautiful old age. He has already begun to enter that stage. Someone has said that we should feel old age rather by the strength of the soul, than by the weakness of the body. Such an individual is pictured here. He has had troubles and disappointments which have "broken the solid cake of habit, and checked the growth of self-satisfaction." Unbroken success has not been his. In-

deed unbroken success is almost too severe a trial for anybody. This man has not relaxed his guard. He knows that in the warfare of the spirit, there is no exemption for persons over fifty.

"There is no discharge in that war." He has faced temptations and problems. He has overcome them. His face shows the marks of battle, but it shows also the mastery of the spirit. It is like the strong, old stone tower, rough and rugged, over which the moonlight plays in fascinating light and shade.

Here is

## III

## SIMPLICITY

There is no ornate architecture visible. There is no involved ritual in this service. There is no stilted form of worship. All is simple. All is direct. All is filled with life. All is vibrant with truth. Simplicity marks the entire scene.

It is an interesting and significant fact that the church has always been more powerful when it has been most simple. The days of deep decadence, and heartbreaking corruption in the church were the days of her elaborate rituals and her tremendous wealth. In those days she reared magnificent cathedrals out of the blood-money of the poor. She rejoiced in elaborate ceremonials. They were hollow mockery, and empty sham. A single one of these enormous cathedrals cost more than all of the houses of the people who built them, and yet, with all this devotion, the mass of the people were not lifted up by the high towers and lofty columns of the sanctuary. The minds and hearts of the people were not refined by gazing at the faces of the angels in pictures, and the saints in stone.

With all of this magnificence, with all of this ornate decoration, there was little pity for the poor, and little comfort for the sorrowing, when the wealth of the world was given by millions, to build churches that are still the wonder of the ages for vastness and beauty.

The church in days gone by was immensely rich. In some of the great cathedrals of Europe, in the middle ages, the gold coins were literally scooped with shovels, into sacks to be carted off to the treasury. But if you were looking for the lowest and the worst of all the population of Europe, you would not need to go beyond the shadow of these sanctuaries, that represented the utmost possible effort of wealth and genius to make them great and beautiful. You could see men of the basest minds, and the most brutal passion, kneeling in the dim light, on the floor, before images and altars, under the arches and domes of cathedrals which had been preaching in stone for centuries. The great procession, the gorgeous robes, the glorious music, dazzle the eye and ear, but they do not pull the tempted out of the fire; they bring no hope or consolation to them that are in affliction and despair. In losing the simplicity of Christ, they lost, also, the power of Christ. Men may walk under beautiful arches and may live within sight of the soaring lines of wonderful architecture, and still be earthly and sensual and debased.

Dr. March tells of visiting a great cathedral at Seville. He stole away into a side chapel to hear the organ play without interruption from the whine of beggars or the whisper of spectators. As the many voices of the marvelous instrument rang through the long aisles and lofty arches, he closed his eyes and thought of everything that is most glorious and pure and triumphant in the rejoicing of heavenly

hosts. It seemed to him as if the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven had come down to fill that earthly temple with their harping and voices. The strains ceased, a procession passed with fifty men swinging censers, and chanting litanies. They belonged to the cathedral. They had been under the refining influence of such glorious music and such magnificent architecture all their lives, but there was no expression either of thought or of devotion in their faces. They seemed to him the grossest set of men he had met in many a day.

These ancient churches set pictures and statues and ceremonies and relics to speak to the people. They had elaborate ritual and magnificent architecture, and there was much ceremony and form. They had lost the simplicity, the power, the appeal of the Saviour. They had hedged up the open gates of gospel grace with bolts and bars, with terror and mystery; while the voice of Christ was crying from the gates of the heavenly kingdom to every wanderer, "Behold I set before thee an open door." Thy had made the church a gorgeous and gloomy sepulcher for the dead, when it should have been a cheerful and inviting home for the living. The book of the gospels was inlaid all over with diamonds and pearls and precious stone, and carried into the midst of a great congregation, not to be read, but that the people might kiss the cover. Sacramental services of solid gold, weighing thirteen hundred pounds; crosses and croziers, blazing with gems; vessels of silver, and vestments heavy with gold; diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, costing millions of dollars; a single robe worn by a minister in Moscow carried fifty-five pounds' weight of pearl and precious stone, designed to make the House of God venerable and attractive in the eyes of men; yet upon

this very city and nation, Satan has, in these latter days, set his seal! He has turned a vast population into the channels of atheism and of hellish destruction. There is no problem pressing more heavily upon the heart of the world today than the problem of Red Russia! The condition there is the result of the failure of the church; the loss of the simplicity that is in Christ; the introduction of ornate and intricate forms of worship; the substitution of the external for the internal. All these things took the religious life so far from the reach of ordinary men, that they only looked on in vacant wonder, and never thought of making that life their own.

It is not impossible that even in our day, we are spending too much on elaborate churches. The problem is a very acute one, especially in mission fields. It is not impossible that Christianity will have to turn to a much more simple way of life and of worship, than that which we follow today. It may be that the foreign mission fields, as they develop, will show us how to make this transition and application.

Here is

## IV

## PRACTICABILITY

Christ came that men might have life. He spoke of Himself as the Water of Life. He declared that He was the Bread of Life. His teaching from first to last was intensely practical. It was calculated to give men the very best that there is in this life, and to fit them for the life to come.

We are intended to live for two worlds at a time. If we insist upon one world at a time, we lose the best in both worlds,—this and the one to come. We

are made on the two-world scale. We may ignore the fact or object to it, but that does not alter the fact. Christ is the most *practical* Friend that men have ever had. His teaching transforms life. It brings us to heaven while we are still on our way, and introduces us to the glories of our Father's House, while we are yet traveling thither. He is the practical Christ.

Why do we so persistently miss this truth in connection with Him?

Dr. William H. Boddy says that "one reason is, *the very charm of His personality.*"

"Our souls are drawn to Him. We see in Him the beauty for which our spirits have thirsted. We acclaim Him with our hearts bowed down; and it becomes very easy to substitute a kind of *moral admiration* for a *deep ethical consecration.*" We make the very beauty of His character and the splendor of His spirit a barrier to a heroic, definite, steadfast *application* of His principles of life—to *our everyday life.* We lose ourselves in speculation about Him, and fail to make "practical application of His teaching to our own living." "It is because of this attitude that men will build cathedrals, and organize a complicated system of ritual and worship, and yet be tolerant and supine in the presence of monstrous social evils." In this Sermon on the Mount, Christ is speaking about such things as loving one's enemies; passing condemnatory judgment upon no one; going through hours of persecution and suffering, confident and radiant in the steadfast assurance of ultimate blessing. There is much talk among some people about these truths. They discuss these good things. They "exalt them in ornate rituals, and somehow it gives a kind of satisfaction and quiets the regal demand

that we actually *live by* the highest vision our souls have seen." We do much lip service to Christ, but all the while we are missing the main thing, which is a steady, courageous application of His teaching, to our lives.

Another reason may be described as,—detachment.

We give Him such a peculiar place in our thought, and in the affairs of the world, that He is totally detached from life. We think of Him as moving constantly amid the glamour and splendor and mystery of another world.

We think of His wonderful birth, of the song of the angels and of the wise men following "the way of the wandering star." We like to think of Him as a Divine Being from some far off shore, "whose soul-barque, for a little while, put into these narrow, shallow inlets of time." And before we know it, He has become intangible, removed, aloof from our ordinary work-a-day lives. We say, "Of course, He was God, but I am a poor, weak, failing, human being, I am no son of God. The splendid heights which He trod are unavailable and unapproachable by me." And before we know it, we have entirely severed Him from any practical connection with our daily lives. It is this very thing which Jesus cried out against, when He said, "Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Again He said, "This is My commandment, that ye love one another even as I have loved you,—*that ye love even as I!*" "Father, as Thou didst send Me into the world, even so I have sent them." "I am the Light of the World," He said again. *"Ye are the light of the world."* Jesus declares that it was not enough to go through the world in a decent, respectable way, according to the standards of one's age. We

are to live His life after Him. We are to take up the cross, as He did, and follow Him.

He seems impracticable to us because of compartment thinking and living.

We set metes and bounds to the operation of His ideals. We practice pure love in the home, but in business and industry, who would be so foolish as to believe that love should be a guiding principle there? We believe in kind and active good will among friends and neighbors. But in the family of nations, who would be so foolish as to believe in the expediency of kindness and love, of good will and brotherhood. Who but Jesus?

We are sure the principles of the Sermon on the Mount will work among individuals, but our faith falters when we attempt to think in world-wide terms.

This brings me to the fifth thing which one sees in this picture. And that is

## V

## ETERNALITY

Christ in this Sermon on the Mount, was giving expression, not to some beautiful, sweet, pleasant saying. A man said to me the other day, "I think the Sermon on the Mount is such a *pretty* thing!"

Not long ago, I stood at Niagara Falls. I saw that tremendous avalanche of water rushing in unending volume over the tremendous precipice. A woman near-by said, "Isn't it cute?" In heaven's name! what can be done with a woman of that kind? It was not merely lack of vocabulary which was troubling her, but lack of every fine, inner, deep, spiritual sense of grandeur, of awe, and of wonder! And so did this man, who describes the Sermon on

the Mount as being "a *pretty* thing," lack spiritual perception. Christ was not seeking to say something that was pleasant and sweet and charming and nice! *He was giving enunciation, distinctly and calmly, to the eternal, rock-ribbed, everlasting laws that lie at the base of this universe;*—laws which men, as individuals, and as nations, will recognize and follow, or men, as individuals and nations, *will* perish from the face of the earth!

"Isn't it sweet?"

What drivel! What asininity! What inanity! What imbecility!

We speak of breaking the Ten Commandments. *No one in all the world ever broke one of them. We only break ourselves against them.* We may revolt against them and defy them. We may beat upon them with angry fists, and gnash upon them with fierce teeth. They are unmoved. They are eternal. They stand unharmed at our ferocious attack. We are broken. We are bruised and crushed and bleeding. They stand majestic, calm, unmoved. Men may ignore Christ's words. They may scoff at them. They may ridicule them, and drive straight across them. If they do so, *men* suffer. They pay the penalty. They die. If we ignore these truths, God in His own good time, will raise up a generation which will *not* ignore them. Here is Eternality. Christ is giving, in quiet tone, expression to eternal truths. *We will hear them, and be saved; or, we will ignore them, and go down to utter loss and destruction. For they are eternal.* "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Matthew 24:34.)

## Sermon VI

## "CHRIST AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA"

(From the Painting by Hofmann)

Scripture Lesson: *John 4:1-35.*
Text: *John 4:7*

*The Artist.*

The reader is referred to the sermon on the picture "The Christ," for a discussion of the life and work of Hofmann, the artist of this picture.

*The Picture.*

From the standpoint of technique this picture is one of the finest ever produced by Hofmann. In the original the colors are blue, red, black, gray and orange. The artist has pictured the Palestinian grape vine covering the stone superstructure of the well, while behind appear the rugged outlines of Mount Gerizim. Jacob's well is located not far from the town of Sychar, which lies between the mountains Gerizim, and Ebal. There are in the picture two rather surprising inaccuracies. First there should be no bale to the water pitcher such as is shown here. The custom in Palestine is to carry the water pitcher on the head. It was never carried by a bale such as is attached to our ordinary bucket. The second inaccuracy is seen in the fact that the water did not flow out of a cavern through a spout into an outer container as he has pictured it. The water was rather secured by letting down buckets into the well and pouring it from these buckets into

the pitchers which the women brought at the eventide to the well.

Jacob's well was located near the ground Jacob gave to Joseph. (Genesis 33:19) The well is still there. When Jacob dug it, it was one hundred and fifty feet deep. Today it is only one hundred and ten feet deep. Tourists insisted upon dropping in stones to hear how far they would fall, with the result that the well was filled up until it was only about forty feet deep. In 1910 it was cleared out, and is now about one hundred and ten feet deep. It is seven and a half feet wide at the mouth, and gradually widens until it reaches a diameter of nine feet. The upper part is built of stone, while the lower portion is cut out of the solid limestone rock. In days gone by pilgrims could always rely on finding plenty of clear fresh water, but now it sometimes runs dry in summer. The site is owned by the Greek Orthodox Church, whose followers have built a beautiful little limestone chapel inclosing the well. The Crusaders built a cross shaped church on this spot, and before their time the Latins in Jerome's day had built a church, the ruins of which may still be seen. In 1881 Bishop Barclay removed the covering stone of the well, and disclosed the marks made by the lowering and lifting of the ropes, by which water was drawn to the surface. It is evident that Jacob lived in this place for a long time. To dig such a well was not only the work of years, but was also considered a great feat of benevolence, more important than building a fortress.

Standing on Mount Ebal nearby one can get a magnificent view of the Holy Land. Hermon and the heights of Judah are both within sight. The Jordan is only twenty miles or less away while the Mediterranean seacoast is thirty miles away,

both clearly visible. One is impressed strongly with the influence of so small a province on the history of the entire world. The explanation is within sight as one looks down at the mouth of the glen where lies the little heap of brown stones—Jacob's well, where Christ said, "Neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father; but the time cometh and now is when true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth." Here it was in this little valley between Ebal and Gerizim that Israel was assembled at a great inaugural service upon taking possession of the country to hear read alternately the blessings and the curses from the word of God. It is faithfully recorded in the book of Joshua.

What is in the picture?

Here is

## I

## TACT

Christ had the genius of approach! The good Samaritan "*went where he was.*" Christ knew how to approach people in a sane, tactful, courteous, effective way. He opened the conversation with this woman in the most natural way. It is not necessary to be queer, or affected, to do good personal work. In fact, just the contrary is true. Clear, sane, common sense (which someone has declared is very uncommon), sympathy, understanding, these things are absolutely necessary to the one who would win souls. This approach on the part of the Saviour was a masterpiece of perfect naturalness, gentlemanliness, and of tremendous effectiveness. He asked a favor of this woman. It was, of course, from the Oriental standpoint, an amazing thing to do. He does it, however, in such a natural and gentlemanly

way, that no possible offense could be taken. I recall well an experience which was mine when with one of the great preachers of Chicago I went to call upon a member of his church who was ill. After having visited for a moment in the sick room, upon turning to leave, this preacher said to the trained nurse who was in attendance, "I hope that you are a Christian. You know it was Christ who first taught us about being sympathetic and helpful to those in need. You are in a wonderful and Christlike profession. You ought to be a Christian. I hope you are." The nurse smiled and said, "Yes, Doctor, I am." Could anything be more sane than that? Could anything be more gentlemanly than his approach to her? Could anything be more effective? That preacher had learned from Jesus. Here was tact of the finest kind. Too many have the idea that to be dead in earnest we must be a little odd, a bit queer, somewhat eccentric. It is not so. The *only effective personal workers* are the tactful, patient, sane, normal workers.

Here is

## II

## BROAD MINDEDNESS

Christ was not troubled about the ugly spirit that existed between the Jews and the Samaritans. He did not share, in the slightest degree, in that spirit. The issues with which Christ dealt were much too great for such narrow nationalistic hatreds and prejudices. It was a hatred that ran very deep on the part of the Jews. The Samaritans, it will be remembered, were a mongrel race. When in 722 B.C. Sargon captured the northern kingdom and carried into captivity the flower of the people, the land was repopulated by the importation of people

from his own country, who intermarried with the remaining riffraff, and scum of the Jews. When in 536 B.C. Cyrus permitted the Jews to return and rebuild the temple, the colonists of Samaria asked permission to help in the work. This permission was promptly and indignantly refused them. In 445 B.C. they opposed Nehemiah in his work. They were a constant "thorn in the flesh" to the Jews. The Jewish people still look with great disfavor upon the Samaritans, partly because of the radical difference in the theology of the two nations. According to the Samaritans the coming of the Messiah is to take place immediately and before the day of judgment, or six thousand years after the creation of the earth. As these years have now elapsed, he now, all unknown, is going about upon the earth. The Samaritans expected, in 1853, a great political revolution, and that in 1863 the kings of the earth would assemble the wisest out of all nations, in order, by mutual consent, to discover the true faith. In this conference they expected their own representatives to win the day, lead the people to Gerizim, where under the twelve stones they would find the Ten Commandments, and under the stone of Bethel, utensils and manna.

Christ had no sympathy with the narrow prejudices out of which grew these later Samaritan absurdities; nor on the other hand did He sympathize with the narrow bitter spirit of the Jewish people. While His mission was primarily to the Jews, it broke over in its fullness and love and scope to these poor, lost sheep of Samaria. No Jew would speak to a Samaritan, much less to a Samaritan woman. As a matter of fact, in the Orient men seldom speak to women in public. Dr. George L. Robinson tells of one experience which he had. He

was almost killed for asking a girl for a drink. The Oriental puts upon such a request a very sinister interpretation.

Here is

III

THE BEGINNING OF THE LONG HARD ROAD

This was the real test. Christ was here resigning Himself to the decision which He had made upon the occasion of the temptation, when He determined to do His work in the long and difficult, but sure, way. He had only recently come from that temptation experience where other ways had been suggested to Him; ways that were easy, ways that were spectacular, ways that were dramatic. Over against them, He had chosen the slow hard way; but the only finally effective way, namely, dealing one by one with souls. It is still the way of Christ and the effective way of the church. Not by mystification or amazement, such as would be caused by casting Himself down from the temple; not by selfish gratification, or stupendous philanthropic enterprises, such as making stones bread; not by compromise, worshipping Satan, is the world to be won, but by the long, hard, plain, direct confronting of individual souls with the truth, and urging their acceptance of it. We depend in these days too much upon mass movement, upon crowd psychology. Christ did most of his work in hand to hand grapple with individual souls. The effective and abiding work of soul winners is still done in the same way.

Here is

IV

APPRECIATION

Christ was not discouraged at the smallness of the audience. So great was His appreciation of the

value of human personality that He gave to this one woman truths of transcendent importance, and spoke words which can never be lost in all the literature of the earth. He said, "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Remember that this was a sinful woman. She was, however, not mentally sluggish. She did not understand *the water* to which He referred, but then neither did the disciples understand *the bread* to which He referred (John 4:13-33). Christ, in His willingness to preach eloquently to this audience of one, stands over in sharp contrast to one of His modern followers, who declined to deliver his sermon because there were only five people present! A Scotch preacher considered the series of evangelistic meetings, which he had been conducting, a failure because after the last night was over, only one small boy had declared his faith in Christ, and had accepted Him as his Saviour. However, that little boy, who came clattering down that last night from the balcony of the church, to take his place in the front, was Robert Moffatt. If that good old preacher had done nothing else in all his life, other than win that one boy to Christ, his life would have been well worth while. When Robert Moffatt died, he swept with him into the kingdom of God a whole continent. Our prayer should be that God would give to us vision clearly to perceive, through the veil of circumstances and trivialities, the radiance and abiding worth of personality. Beecher, upon one occasion—a very rainy night—delivered an eloquent sermon with only one man in the congregation. Years later that man came to him and avowed that it was that sermon which had sent him into the ministry, where he had been laboring for many years. Christ here manifests so

cordial an appreciation of personality that He delivers an eloquent sermon to this one woman giving to her some of His richest wisdom.

Here is

## V

## EVASION

When Christ puts His finger upon her sin, instantly she changes the subject! How very modern it all is! How familiar to every preacher. We may talk in generalities with much gusto and show of enthusiasm, but when we become specific, and lay finger on the secret sore, or when we tear aside the robe of concealment and display the inner foulness, how quickly the topic is changed. Like a skillful surgeon, Christ cuts true and deep to the very heart of the disease. This woman did not care about the place to worship! (V. 20). She was squirming under the piercing thrust of His words. He had discovered and made plain her own terrible sin. There are many people who are willing to talk of sin in general terms, but will not talk about *their* sin. A little boy was listening intently while his mother was telling the story of Ahab, and how he coveted and stole the vineyard which Naboth owned. Turning to the child the mother said, "Dear, it was not right for you to take James' apple from him." The little lad looked up into her face and said, "Mother, I think you are wandering a good way from the subject, and getting too personal!" Christ understood, and taught clearly that there can be no salvation until men come face to face with their own individual sin and responsibility.

Here is

## VI

## LIFE

A recent author in his book says, "One knows what it is, what it looks like. They are running about like mad, not knowing one another nor caring, because they all seem to be looking for something. I wonder—are we? Is that the trouble? Are we looking for something? You can see it in half of the faces you see. Some wanting, and knowing that they are wanting something. Others wanting something but just putting up with it, just content to be dissatisfied. You can see it, yes, you can. Looking for what? Love? But lots have love. Happiness? But are not lots happy? But are they? It goes deeper than that. It is some universal thing that is wanting. I think it is something that religion alone can give. But it does not give it to them. Light, some new light, to give everyone certainty in religion; in belief? Light? A coal merchant in northwestern New York, said to a man the other day, 'When we were poor, we looked forward to the time when we would have our own home. We got that. Then we wanted a summer home, and we got that. Then we needed a southern winter establishment, and we got that also. Then a lodge in the woods of Maine. We have them all now, and they are shut up most of the year while my wife and daughter are hurrying feverishly through Europe looking for something. I sit at home and dig for more money to get something else'." Is it not a true picture of life? This woman was simply one of a great multitude of dissatisfied souls. Thirsty souls! The agony of physical thirst is a very real and well known thing in the Orient, but who can describe the tragedy of spiritual thirst? All have it. Our yearn-

ing for God is inherent. It is a part of us, and will be through all eternity. Bernard of Clairveaux spoke the truth when he wrote in the eleventh century

"Jesus, Thou Joy of loving hearts,
Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men
From the best bliss that earth imparts
We turn unfilled to Thee again.

We taste Thee, O Thou living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still;
We drink of Thee, the Fountain-head,
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill."

Augustine declared, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and we cannot rest until we rest in Thee." We must learn that *things* can never satisfy *life*. We must understand that *the spirit cannot be fed upon the husks of material things*. Certainly if there was ever a man who had the opportunity of gratifying himself with things, it was Lord Byron. You remember however what he said,

"My days are in the yellow leaf,
The flower, the fruit, the leaf are gone.
The worm, the canker, and the grave
Are mine alone."

There were few men in the 19th century in England that had greater opportunities of gratifying their desires that did Mr. Wilford Blunt. He traveled all over the world. He particularly explored Syria, Arabia, Persia and Mesopotamia. He spoke Arabic like a native. He had a splendid stud of Arab horses, and took great pleasure in them; but at the end of his life, according to his diary, when he was dying in sad disappointment, this is what he said, "A black melancholy is on me, caused by failure everywhere in life. My poetry; my eastern politics;

my Arab horses, were all strings to my bow, and they have all one after another snapped, and today, looking through my memoirs, I perceive how slackly they are written, and how unworthy they are, yet the diaries are full of things that are too important to destroy, and too unimportant to preserve, and they overwhelm me with despair." There you have it. The very words of Christ in different form—"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again." Here in this picture is life.

A. *The life that satisfies the soul's thirst for altruism.* We are so made that if the slants of our life are in, we poison our own spirit. In my Seminary days, a smart-aleck student asked our professor, "Doctor, what killed the Dead Sea?" The answer came, quick as a flash, "Exactly the same thing, sir, which will kill any life, namely, constantly receiving and never giving!" It is a statement of a fundamental law. Our personalities are so constructed that *we must be altruistic* or our very spirits shrivel and become hideously deformed. We cannot constantly receive and never give without losing our own spiritual life. Of course we cannot entirely shrivel away! We cannot destroy personality. Even God cannot do that! We can, however, deform it. Furthermore, the process of deformation is so subtle and gradual that the soul may not realize it. When a modern multimillonaire, was attacked in his office one day by a maniac, who attempted to shoot him, one of the employes of the office threw himself before the would-be assassin and received in his own body the bullet intended for his employer. The employe was sent to a hospital where he spent many weeks near the point of death. When he recovered it was only to live the remainder of his life in physical pain and weakness. When he

asked for some compensation for his act, he refused to pay a cent, *declaring that the employe had not been asked to do what he had done! Something had died in the soul of a man who could do that!* It had all happened so gradually, he had been entirely unconscious of the deadening influence that was at work in his own spirit. Let it be said for the credit of his good wife, that after his death, she remembered, in handsome way, this poor employe who had risked his life in defense of her selfish husband.

B. *Here is life that satisfies the soul's thirst for enterprise.* We study the universe and are amazed at the unimaginable distances, the tremendous bodies therein contained. The soul, however, is greater than any of these. The real miracle is not in the telescope or the stars, but in the spirit of *the puny little man who peers through the telescope!* What will one do with such a soul? A soul that can love, pray, trust. How wonderful it is! It is the peak, the climax of creation. Who can estimate the value of the soul? If we try to estimate it by its exquisite organization we see how wonderful it is. It is the most wonderful piece of mechanism ever put together. Machinery is of value in proportion as it is mighty and silent at the same time. You look at the machine in the Philadelphia Mint, and, as you see it performing its wonderful work, you will be surprised to find how silently it runs. Machinery that roars and tears soon destroys itself; but silent machinery is often most effective. So it is with the soul of man, with its tremendous faculties—it moves in silence. Justice without any racket, lifting its scales; memory, without any noise, bringing down its treasures; conscience, taking its

judgment seat, without any excitement; the understanding and the will all doing all their work. Velocity, majesty, might, but silent—silent! You listen at the door of your heart. You can hear no sound. The soul is all quiet. It is so delicate an instrument that no human hand can touch it. You break a bone, and with fingers and bandages the surgeon sets it; the eye becomes inflamed, the apothecary's wash cools it; but a soul off track, unbalanced, no human power can readjust. With one sweep of its wing it circles the universe, and overleaps the throne of God. In the hour of death the soul is so mighty it throws aside the body as though it were a toy. It drives back medical skill as impotent. It breaks through the circle of loved ones who stand around the dying couch. With one leap it springs beyond stars and moon and sun and chasms of immensity. It is a soul superior to all material things! No fires can consume it; no floods can drown it; no rocks can crush it; no walls can impede it; no time can exhaust it; it wants no bridge on which to cross a chasm. It desires no plummet with which to sound a depth. A soul so mighty, so swift, so silent, it is a priceless soul! This is the soul to which Christ came that He might bring life. To employ this soul *entirely* in the selling of groceries and shoes, the mining of coal, or any other occupation, is to prostitute it from its high and holy purpose. There must be some greater task for so tremendous a faculty. To put so powerful and wonderful a soul to such petty enterprises is like using a Liberty motor to fly a kite, or a great steam engine to dig a child's tunnel through a sand bank. The engine so used spoils itself, and also ruins the works. It racks itself to pieces. It requires *a load commensurate with its*

*power.* Give me an enterprise fitted to my power and dignity, cries the soul. Christ answers that cry by saying (1) Subdue thyself—"Go and sin no more." (2) Win the world—"Go ye into all the world." The soul that does not do this loses its life through the prostitution of itself to petty tasks. It dissipates its inherent, vital and powerful forces. Used properly, these forces develop life in the soul. Prostituted they bring death to the soul.

C. Here is *life that satisfies the soul's thirst for eternity.* We all revolt at the thought of extinction. There is in each soul a deep secret protest against annihilation. There is an instinct which hopes for life. Sir Oliver Lodge says, "I believe in immortality as the final expression of the natural doctrine of the conservation of values." He means that if personality is established as a fact, then nature, having produced so precious a thing, will certainly guard it from extinction. Nature destroys nothing. It is the same abiding faith which Tennyson stresses in his poem, "In Memoriam."

". . . . . And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
  Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
  Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
  And love Creation's final law—
  Tho Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
  Who battled for the True, the Just,
  Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tear each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him."

Here is the life in Christ that satisfies the soul's thirst for eternity. Jesus said, "I give unto them eternal life." (John 10:28.) However, if the soul is to be satisfied, if this thirst is to be quenched, the water, of course, must be drunk. We must not be satisfied with discussing Christ. We must not content ourselves with analyzing Him. Thirst is not quenched by analyzing water in the chemistry test tube. It must be consumed. That is exactly what we must do with Christ. "To as many as *receive Him,* to them gives He the power to become the sons of God; even to them that believe on His name." How can we be satisfied? Where can we find Him? Where better than through what He says here, "I that speak unto thee am He."

"Speak to Him, thou, for He heareth,
And spirit with spirit may meet;
Closer is He than breathing,
Nearer than hands and feet."

This story is told by Wesley Bailey, the founder of the mission to lepers in India and Asia. He said that upon one occasion he was conducting a communion service among the lepers. They stood up in a row in front of the communion rail and a piece of bread was put into the hand of each. One of them was terribly disfigured; his eyes were eaten out with the disease; his toes were gone from his feet so that he could barely stand; his fingers were eaten off and the palms of his hand had lost their sense of feeling; but there he was with Christ in his heart. Mr. Bailey said that he put the piece of bread in his hand as he did the rest, but when he

spoke the word of reception, all received the bread except this man. He stood holding out his hand for he could not feel that the bread was in it. The sense of feeling was gone. He was waiting to receive what was already in his hand. A brother leper seeing the situation, said to him, "Take it brother; it is in your hand." That is it. You do not need to go out of this room tonight to receive Jesus. He is here. Take Him now. He is the water of life, the water that satisfies the soul's thirst for altruism. The water that satisfies the soul's thirst for enterprise. The water that satisfies the soul's thirst for eternity.

## Sermon VII

### "THE TRANSFIGURATION"

(From the Painting by Raphael)

Scripture Lesson: *Matthew 17:1-18.*
Text: *Matthew 17:1*

*The Artist.*

The reader is referred for a discussion of the artist of this picture to the chapter headed, "Sistine Madonna."

*The Picture.*

Raphael was possessed of one of the most clear and sunny spirits imaginable. He delighted in scenes of joy, and was extremely ill at ease when he became the bearer of unhappy messages. It is extremely significant that he painted no Crucifixion scene after he was twenty years of age. This Transfiguration scene fitted his prevailing mood and genius exactly. He was at work upon this picture when he was taken ill, on March 28, 1520. His illness lasted eight days, and at the expiration of that time Raphael passed away. His death caused the most unbounded mourning throughout the entire city of Rome. His unfinished picture, "The Transfiguration," was exhibited above his bier. From a technical standpoint the Transfiguration is not as great a picture as the Sistine Madonna. This is due, perhaps, partly, at least, to the fact that the difficulties of composition were much more serious; and also, to the fact that the painting is not entirely from

the master's hand. It was finished by pupils who took up the work after his death. The twelve years which Raphael had spent in Rome were years of unceasing activity, filled with the hardest kind of work. There is little doubt that this incessant activity and the multitudinous calls that were made upon him resulted in his early death. The scene is laid on Mount Hermon, a majestic, snow-clad mountain, just north of Palestine proper. It is 9200 feet high, and extends about eighteen miles from north to south. The wolf, the leopard and the brown bear are still found on Mount Hermon, and the mountain is the dominating feature of all the region around. It was the loftiest place on earth known to the men of the Bible, and some spot on its sides, or the plateau on the summit, probably furnished the scene for the Transfiguration. The mountain is visible from practically every part of the land of Palestine. It is always covered with snow.

*What is in the Picture?*

Here is

I

## THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF PRAYER

Notice that the Transfiguration was not only *while* He prayed, but *because* He prayed. Prayer is the great transformer. Matthew in his account says, "His face did shine as the sun." You will remember that in Exodus 34:29-35, the scripture describes the shining of Moses' face as he came down from the mount after his interview with God. Compare also Acts 6:15, where the Transfiguration of Stephen's face, on the occasion of his trial is described, and it is declared that "his face was as the face of an angel." The Greek word which Matthew uses and which is translated "transfigured," is one

which denotes an *inward* change, not merely an outward one. It is to say that Christ's deity shone through the veil of His flesh. When Phillips Brooks was at the height of his power as the Pastor of Trinity Church, Boston, it is said that when he came to the end of some splendid sermon as he pled with men for their souls, it was impossible to look into his face without being inspired. Much the same thing is said of Maud Ballington Booth as she made intercession in behalf of the poor failures in the prison. The prayer of the Master transformed Him so completely that "His raiment became dazzling." The literal word means "flashing like lightning." This is all the more significant when one remembers that there was probably near at hand a large amount of snow by which a comparison of whiteness might be obtained. It is very evident that the writers are struggling, in this expression, to convey an impression of divine and overpowering splendor. While John in his gospel does not tell about the Transfiguration, he does speak of the vision of the glorified Saviour in the Revelation, (Chapter 1:13-16) which must have reminded the aged apostle of the scene on Mount Hermon. Prayer still has transforming power. There have never been, I suppose, more beautiful and vivid words written describing the transforming power of prayer than those which Archbishop Trent wrote when he said:

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will avail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take;
What parched grounds refresh, as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all the distant and the near
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear!
We kneel, how weak! we rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong;

That we are ever overborne with care;
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?"

Here are

## II

## TWO GREAT TRIUMVIRATES

The first triumvirate is composed of Jesus (the God man), Moses (the law giver), and Elijah (the prophet of the chariot of fire). Moses had been dead fifteen hundred years.

Raphael pictures the second triumvirate composed of John, (the beloved), James (who was destined to be the proto-martyr), and Peter (the stone man). These three, who composed the inner circle of disciples, are shown lying prone on the top of the mountain, struck down evidently by the supreme glory and dazzling splendor of the vision. One of the most significant points to be noticed is that Moses represents the Law, Elijah represents the Prophets; the one recalling the foundation of Israel, the commonwealth; the other, its reformation. Here Christ is binding together the law and the prophets. He had come, as He himself declared, to *fulfil* both the law and the prophets. There is much more, however, in the scene than that.

Here is

## III

## DEMONSTRATION AND PROPHECY

(a) *Demonstration and prophecy of His coming kingdom.* This scene is the fulfilment of what was promised in Matthew 16:28, which is a *direct reference* to the Transfiguration. Three of "them standing there" saw Him "coming in His kingdom," in miniature in this Transfiguration. For an in-

spired corroboration of this statement, read II Peter 1:16-18. The Scofield Bible says, "The scene contained in miniature all the elements of the future kingdom in manifestation. (1) The Lord, not in humiliation, but in glory. (2) Moses, glorified, representing *the redeemed who have passed through death in the kingdom.* (3) Elijah, glorified, *representing the redeemed who have entered by translation* (read I Cor. 15:50-53, and I Thess. 4:14-17). (4) The three disciples, not glorified, representing Israel in the flesh in the future kingdom (Ezek. 37). (5) The multitude at the foot of the mountain (verse 14) representing the nations who are to be brought into the kingdom after it is established over Israel (Isaiah 11:10-12).

(b) Here is a demonstration of what man's original life was, and a prophecy of what the redeemed life will be. Christ appeared here surrounded by dazzling light. One has no desire whatever to belabor the point, but is it not an indication of that transcendent glory in which man was originally created; that glory which he lost in the fall, and which is seen here again in the redeemed state? As suggested in another sermon in this book, Psalm 104:1 describes the light by which God is surrounded. Man being made in God's image doubtless had some such inherent, forthshining glory in his original state. Habakuk 3:4 would lead one also to this belief. Adam and Eve complained of their nakedness. It could not, certainly, have been the absence of clothing for they never had had any. It was, doubtless, the loss of that radiant glory in which they had been created, and by which they had been surrounded. It is that glory also of which the minister speaks as he stands at the open grave and says, "And they shall be raised with body incorruptible,

like unto His own glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." Our resurrection bodies will be like this radiant Transfiguration body of our Lord's and like His own wonderful resurrection body.

Here is

## IV

## LAYING ASIDE OF DISGUISE

Christ moved among men, masked. He concealed His inherent glory in a veil of sinful flesh. That is the whole point of the Kenosis (emptying) passage (Phil. 2:6-8). Here is described a tragic and voluntary descent of the Saviour, for us. But in this Transfiguration scene, He laid aside, for a moment, the earthly veil of disguise, and assumed His natural glory and honor. His inner radiance burst through the human body, which ordinarily hid it from men's eyes, and shone out with a dazzling power. His form was bathed in light. His countenance was transformed by the splendor, as if a hindering mask had been thrown off. It was the majestic flame of Deity, disclosing itself. There are many who have considered this a unique chapter in Christ's history, supposing it the *only* time when His inward glory shone forth through the veil of flesh, or heavenly inhabitants came to visit him. That supposition is unwarranted. Christ's custom was to slip out under the silent Syrian stars, to pour out His soul in prayer where no human watcher was present to note what happened. It is certainly not impossible and not unlikely that there was, frequently, a Transfiguration upon such occasions, as He prayed. The angels may have talked with Him. The Father, Himself, may have spoken to His Son,

at other times. Our Saviour's prayer after Baptism and during the Passion Week received an answer in articulate words. We are told of angelic ministrations at the close of the struggle in the wilderness, and at Gethsemane. It is altogether likely that the cowering of the soldiers, when He went forth to them from the hour of prayer in the garden, was due to the supernal splendor which His face still wore—much like that which the disciples saw on this occasion upon the mount.

Here is

## V

## A PROMISE, A PROPHECY, AND A VISION

This Mount of Transfiguration rises to dizzy heights. It sends its summit into the land of mystery. But to those who ascend, it proves to be also the land of vision and of power. You recall the circumstances of the occurrence on that mount. It had been an unusually hard day, and Christ had been speaking much about His death, coming rejection and shame at Jerusalem. At the evening time, the Master and His chosen three climbed the heights of Mount Hermon.

It was a promise, the thing that happened there, of life beyond the grave. Moses and Elijah were there. The disciples, seeing them, could no longer doubt the reality of existence beyond the grave. They saw them and heard their voices.

It was a prophecy of what that life was to be.

It was a vision of our own resurrection life. The times are ringing with much discussion pro and con in regard to messages from the other side, and comments upon the condition and state of life beyond. It is mostly half-wise and vain speculation. Some

of it is fraud; much of it is guess-work; most of it is unreliable. Here we have a picture that should be quite sufficient to satisfy the most curious. One that is certainly sufficient to testify to the reality of life after death, and to the kind and condition of that life for those who fear and serve God.

Here is

## VI

## CHRIST'S ANSWER TO HUMAN NEED

Peter, with usual impetuosity, wanted to build three tabernacles there. We are not, of course, to think of three permanent buildings. What Peter had in mind was simply the tabernacles or tents made from the interweaving of the leafy bows of the trees; such as were used annually by the Jewish people at their great Feast of Tabernacles;—temporary structures, very lightly and quickly made. It was, however, none the less a foolish suggestion, for *there was no work there for them to do.* They were to take their heavenly experience with them into the valley where the suffering and sinning world lay. From the Mount of Vision, they were to step into the Valley of Service. It was not to be a mere day *dream,* a vision empty and fruitless, but a power to transform human life. God pity the men and women who seek to retain in their own hearts the ecstasy of these moments of vision, and who seek to dwell there alone in tabernacles of selfishness. It simply cannot be done. To seek to do so, is to find the blessing suddenly transformed into wormwood. The inspiration of such high and rich moments can be retained only by descending the mountain, and there in the valley, using the experience in the work of touching and lifting men and women. God did not make mountain tops to be in-

habited. They are not for the homes of men. We ascend the heights to get a broader view of our earthly surroundings, but we do not stay there. The streams take their rise in the highlands, but they quickly descend to the grassy fields and the lowlands below. We are to take these crystal waters and quench the thirst of others. This is just what Christ and the disciples did. They descended the mount, and came to the epileptic boy. Here was an immediate field for the expression of the inspiration which they had received, and they made use of it.

In this picture, not only the mountain top appears radiant with celestial splendor, and visited by heavenly spirit, but the place also where human failure, and triumphant evil cry out in piteous prayer and the maniac's shriek. It is a picture of the Christian life. Not for an instant does Jesus stand bewildered between the vision of God and the calling need of men. With the same voice with which He had conversed with the heavenly visitants, He now expels the unclean spirit. In that miracle the Transfiguration of Jesus went out into the life of mankind. We, as Christians, must be careful to express our moments of vision, and of great spiritual privilege in terms of human service and life.

Raphael has shown, grouped around the foot of the mountain, the people who had come with the father and mother and the little child sorely afflicted, seeking the Saviour's help. It was a case of unusual need. The little boy's dumbness kept him from calling for help. His deafness kept him from hearing the words of healing. The lad furthermore was an only child (Luke 9:38), and was subject to epileptic fits. As soon as the demon in the boy perceived

the presence of the Saviour, and felt His wonderful power, it made a final, fiendish effort, and threw its wretched victim to the ground in a terrible spasm. "How long has he been thus?" asked the pitying Saviour. The father replied that the lad had been subject to these terrible seizures from childhood; and that often the demon had cast him into the fire, and into the water, to destroy him in its fierce malice. "If thou cans't do anything," the distracted father begged, "have compassion on us and help us." He should not have introduced the "If". The omnipotent Christ at once quoted reprovingly, "If thou cans't!" "All things," Jesus went on, giving utterance to an immortal truth, "All things are possible to him that believeth." Of course He did not mean that even the strongest faith could cause God to do anything wrong, or anything that would prove harmful to His children, but He meant that a believer can, in God's strength, do everything that is in accordance with God's will, and no one in his senses would want to do anything contrary to God's will. The father of the lad immediately made answer, an answer that has come shouting down the centuries, a clarion call to a competent faith, as well as an appeal to the source of all power, "I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." No human faith is perfect. But all sincere faith finds acceptance and honor at the hands of our loving, heavenly Father. Raphael has shown the sorrowful mother kneeling before the disciples, imploring their aid for her son. The father holds the struggling child in his strong grip. While the cross does not appear in the Transfiguration scene, it nevertheless is the center thereof. "In the Basilica at Ravenna, there is a mosaic of the sixth century, representing in emblematic form the Transfiguration of Christ. A jewelled

cross set in the midst of a circle of blue, studded with golden stars, is presented to the eyes of the observer. In the midst of the scene appears the cross of Christ, the Saviour of the world. While from the cloud close by is thrust forth a divine hand that points to the cross. This indicates, of course, that the cross was, in the mind of the artist, the center of the Transfiguration scene. Those early artists were right in their reading of this divine event. To the disciples of the earth, the cross may seem an offense, an ignominy and a shame, but to the inhabitants of heaven, it is no ignominy, no disgrace, but a glory and an honor." In these words, Dr. Evans points out the crucial place of the cross in this entire Transfiguration scene. We miss the heart of the picture if we fail to see that it is only through the cross and its acceptance, and its glad and ready bearing in our own lives, that our hearts and lives are transfigured. No human soul reaches its fullest flower of usefulness, its greatest beauty and strength in this world save as it assumes the cross. The cross is an offense to many in this modern day. Because of that fact, there are many in Protestant pulpits who are turning the pulpit into a musing comment on human life, or an endless chain of discussion of the so-called "problems of the world," or the repetition of a sort of ethical rosary. John the Baptist, in common with other great preachers of the past years, did not so preach. He spoke in accents of simple faith, and it required no army of theological experts to decide whether he was talking for or against Christ. It is to be expected that the world will take offense at the cross and the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Church today does not need more movements, more organizations, more federations, more archi-

tecture, or more ritual; but we do need *more conviction* as to the bed-rock facts of the Christian revelation,—those facts upon which the prophets and the apostles built the church, so that it has stood unshaken through the ages. We must make very clear to people the fact that there is no transformation of life, no Transfiguration of heart and character, aside from the power of the cross enthroned in the hearts of men and of women. Men would like to muffle and stifle the witness to Christ. The world, whether in the church or out of it, will let you speak as beautifully as you please about Jesus, but when you begin to insist upon installing in the heart the cross, they take offense. When we declare that Christ is God's eternal sacrifice for men, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, then we discover that the cross still has its ancient offense. Elizabeth Cheney has given a very beautiful and searching description of the test which you and I ought to apply to every new fad, or thought, or "ism" that claims our attention.

"A new religion came to me
With buoyant tread and radiant smile.
And at my door asked joyously
Just to come in and talk awhile.
The jeweled hands were fair to see,
Her white robe glistened in the sun:
'Twas quite agreeable to me
To listen to her silver tongue.

She spoke of wealth and health and peace.
Of pleasure and prosperity.
Of Love Divine which fills all space—
The only great Reality.
Despite her look, her smile, her speech,
My spirit shrank—strange to remark—
As one whose groping fingers reach
Some cold, dead thing amid the dark.

'Give me,' I cried, 'O stranger guest,
Before I entertain thy plea,
An answer to this one request;
Dost come by way of Calvary?'
Swift changed her eyes from day to night;
Her smile to cold superior scorn;
She vanished from my wondering sight,
But left me neither sad nor lorn.

A shining presence filled the space,
A voice beloved spake peace to me—
A Person, rare of truth and grace,
Who came by way of Calvary!"

## Sermon VIII

## "THE RAISING OF LAZARUS"

(From the Painting by Piombo)

Scripture Lesson: *John 11:1-46.*
Text: *John 11:43-44*

*The Artist.*

Sebastiano Del Piombo was born in Venice, of Italian parentage, about 1485. He died in 1547. His surname was Luciani. He derived the name Piombo from his custodianship of the great lead seal of the Papacy. In 1509 he was invited to Rome by Chigi. Early in his work he came under the influence of Michael Angelo, from whom he learned the Venetian breadth of handling. His painting became smooth in character and rather heavy in chiaroscuro. In the work of portraiture Sebastiano's art was more independent, and he achieved better results than in his more dramatic figures. He painted the portraits of a series of Popes, the best known of which is that of Clement VI. It is in the Naples Museum. "The Raising of Lazarus" was painted by Piombo during that period of remarkable activity inspired by Pope Julius II.

*The Picture.*

Piombo painted the picture for Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, and in competition with Raphael's picture, "The Transfiguration." Raphael died before his great picture was completed, so it is not probable that the Cardinal rendered a formal decision in

the contest. There was great rivalry between Piombo and Raphael, and not a little jealousy existed. Raphael was the greater of the two artists. This "Raising of Lazarus" does not rank with "The Transfiguration" by Raphael. The picture is theatrical. The chiaroscuro is defective. It is lacking in devotional spontaneity. The painter is thinking more of the effect of the picture than of Christ's miracle of mercy. The face is forced, artificial and untrue to life. The miracle took place at Bethany. There is no river there. No Roman bridge or modern cathedral, such as the artist has introduced. The face of Christ is poorly done; heavy and unattractive, especially about the mouth. The face is more Italian than Jewish.

It is a tremendous theme which the artist set for himself. If one has had the privilege of seeing Cecil De Mille's picture, the "King of Kings," one understands the fearful emotional tenseness in connection with this scene, "The Raising of Lazarus."

There are three great contrasts in the picture which the artist has brought out in vivid way. These contrasts, so clearly expressed and so important, are enough to make the picture a great one.

Here is

## I

## LOVING FAITH AND HATEFUL UNBELIEF

(a) John, behind Christ, with outstretched hand, is the personification of loving faith. He believed in Christ. He loved Him.

(b) The Pharisee, who glares into His eyes, does not believe in Christ. He hates him. Here Sebastiano has set off in sharp contrast the two great classes of the world. Some love and believe. Others hate and disbelieve. Some believe because they love,

and love because they believe. Others hate because they disbelieve, and disbelieve because they hate. Forever through all the paths of time these two go hand in hand. Love and belief. Hatred and disbelief. They live together in the human heart. They are inseparable. They act and react one upon the other and foster each one the growth of the other. The hateful soul is always the disbelieving soul. The loving soul is always the believing soul. The reason it is difficult, if not impossible, for some people to believe in Christ is because they insist upon living in the cellars of life. They never move into the upper stories. It is only the pure in heart who *have the power* to see God. By vile, unworthy living, men lose the very ability to understand or respond to high and splendid things. Here is the contrast of the ages. The antithesis of eternity. Love versus hatred. Faith versus unbelief. Goodness versus evil. Heaven versus hell. It is an epitome of the fight that rages through the universe. Here, in these two figures, Sebastiano has dramatized that eternal warfare which is waged in every human heart till death come. "There is no discharge in that war," saith the Scripture. It is a fight; hard, long, bitter!

Just inside the entrance of the art gallery in New York, there appear two gigantic figures, engaged in a wrestling match. It is a fight to the death. Every nerve is taut; every muscle is exerted; it is no sham battle, but a desperate hand to hand conflict. The face of the one is like the face of the devil. The face of the other is bright like the face of an angel. There they are in mortal combat. The sculptor is attempting to picture the fight that goes on within the heart of every individual; the fight between that which is worthy and that which is unworthy; the

fight between that which is high and that which is low; the fight between that which is godly and that which is ungodly. Everyone understands what that fight is. We have all experienced it. No one need speak twice about it to anyone, save to a fool. It was this fight which caused Paul to cry out, "O wretched man that I am. When I would do good, evil is with me. The thing that I would, that I do not. The thing that I would not, that I do. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" We have come to days where our thinking in this respect is extremely flabby. Sentimental and neurotic judges are freeing men and women upon the plea of "temporary insanity," when the fact of the matter is that there are none who hear these words or read these pages who could not, inside of one week, be as insane as ninety-nine out of one hundred who are released on such grounds, if we would *go out of these doors and simply give over the fight. If we would lay down the reins. If we would surrender the citadel of the heart to evil.* It is a *fight,* and the good man and the good woman will keep up the fight as long as life lasts. Satan is always eager and ready to come in and take control of the heart into which his entrance is permitted. He desires nothing more than the surrender of the citadel of the soul to him. That way lies insanity. Temporary or *permanent.* That way lies death!

Here is

## II

## WONDER CONTRASTED WITH WORSHIP

(a) The old Pharisee, behind the outstretched arm of Christ, is holding up his hand in astonishment.

(b) His companion is kneeling before Christ, hands together in worship. Here again is an eternal contrast.

The most amazing display of spiritual power is sufficient only to awaken astonishment on the part of some. It brings others, however, to faith and to worship. Is it not because some souls are hard, while others are tender? Some are much more easily reached than others. This old Pharisee could be moved to *wonder,* but not to *worship,* because his soul was encased in a hard shell of preconceived ideas and of illiberality. To be sure, a history worthy of admiration lay behind his illiberality. The Jews, by their exclusiveness, had saved their national existence. At their best, they were illiberal, not from a mean, unworthy spirit, but from an intense devotion to their law, and from a willingness at all costs to keep themselves free from the pollution of men who neither believed nor kept the law; and in many crises, such as accompanied the Maccabean War, they had proved their passionate earnestness in protecting their religious life from Gentile defilement. In spite, however, of the worthy motive which lay behind the narrowness of Jewish sympathies, it was impossible for such boundaries to circumscribe the good will of Christ. Most of the opposition to Him and to His teaching on the part of these bigoted teachers, sprang from the fact that His goodness and good-will overflowed all of the narrow boundaries which their bigotry and exclusiveness had set up. This narrow and bigoted spirit had so blinded the eyes of this man and clouded his brain, that he could not perceive the great miracle in its real significance. But the other old man is worshipping!

People come to the same church. They hear the same sermon. They join in singing the same hymns. Some are only amused or at most, struck with wonder. Others worship and are blessed. What is the reason? *There must be windows in the soul!*

This old man must "be still and hear God" before he can worship. He has chattered God's messenger out-of-doors with his questioning, with his disputes, with his argumentation, with his narrow exclusiveness. It is possible for an individual to talk so much, and to be so wordy, so argumentative and speculative as to entirely drown the voice of God. Like Herod, we "question in many words." When I have heard some people propounding religious difficulties, the answer which has risen to my lips has been, "Why *should* you be able to believe in Christ? What have you ever done to render yourself worthy of such a privilege?" You are thinking of faith as a compliment to be paid to Christ; in reality the power to believe in Him and His word is a great privilege and honor that requires to be purchased with love, humility and self-denial. The sheer fact of the matter is that *we do not owe an answer to the religious objection of everyone.* Religion is, indeed, a subject upon which many may take the liberty of speaking; the most unholy and evil living talk and write of it nothing doubting; but in reality it is a subject upon which very few are entitled to be heard. We may know before hand from their lives what the opinion of many must be about it; and *we know what their opinions are worth!* This old man in the picture can express nothing but astonishment because *he does not have the spiritual depth or understanding to express anything else.* His companion, in the forefront of the

picture, is able to express worship because of that inner development which has been going on in the chambers of his own soul. You get out of a service of worship just what you bring to it. Your blessing is in exact relationship to your capacity to receive.

III

The third contrast is that *between half disbelieving joy, and instant full acceptance.*

This is the contrast between Martha and Mary. Martha is behind the Saviour—face averted, hands upraised. She is frightened at so marvelous a display of power, half disbelieving, overcome with fear and joy and afraid to believe the testimony of her own senses.

Mary, on the contrary, takes one look, and falls at her Saviour's feet—fully believing; eager love and full acceptance written plainly on her face. It is a subtle contrast the artist has given us here, and is true to the respective characters of these two women. Neither Martha nor Mary, being what each was, could have acted differently.

Moreover, the contrast runs out through humanity today, dividing them sharply into these two classes.

There are those, like Martha, cumbered with much serving, to whom spiritual strength and the display of spiritual power come with a shock, and are met with half fear and half faith. Others, like Mary, accustomed to sit at His feet and learn, are ready for these revelations, and accept them instantly and fully. To which class do we belong? It is a matter of soul culture. We Americans need more of it. One of the keenest and most discriminating critiques of American life which I have heard

was uttered by a young Chinese student, a graduate of the University of Illinois. He said to me, "You people are always in such a hurry *going some place* to *get some thing,* that you have no time for prayer, for study, for concentration and for self-examination." In that criticism he laid his finger upon the two prevalent American sins, namely: speed and materialism. Going some place: there is activity and speed; to get some *thing:* there is materialism. Many of us are spiritual illiterates simply because *we have not taken time to cultivate spiritual interests.* How shall great music inspire us if we never give it a chance? How shall Shakespeare attract us if we never give him a careful reading? How shall art lift us if we never think of, or come near it, letting its subtle beauty master us? The reason the material side of life seems ninety-nine times as real as the spiritual side is because we spend ninety-nine per cent of our hours with material things, and give to them ninety-nine per cent of our thought! The men and women who really devote to spiritual interests their thought and their time, very quickly come to learn the truth of Paul's assertion when he said, "The things which are seen are temporal, the things which are not seen are eternal." And they learn also, that the things which are seen are of *little value,* but the things which are not seen are of *eternal value.* Only those who are spiritually literate enter the high and holy place of life. All who reach heaven will be happy and blessed. Each will be *as happy as it is possible for him to be. But some will be much more happy than others,* simply because *the capacity of some will be much greater than the capacity of others.*

I have a friend who occasionally takes me to hear Grand Opera. He has studied music for years. He

sits there as the music swells and rolls, and I think that every nerve and fiber in his being is aquiver with delight. I enjoy the music but I am perfectly sure that I am not getting out of it one tenth of the keen enjoyment which he is experiencing. It is simply because *he has studied music,* has *lived with music,* has thought and dreamed and loved music all these years. In other words, his capacity for enjoyment is far greater than mine. So it will be in heaven and is to all eternity with spiritual things. Each man enjoys to the limit of his capacity. What is your capacity?

Here is

## IV

## COMPASSIONATE DEITY

Christ is the center of the scene. He is the loving compassionate God engaged in a miracle of mercy. Sebastiano has set him off in a blaze of light, which irradiates His face and His garments.

The Scripture declares that Christ wept at the tomb. Here is an expression, in His tears, of His loving, tender compassion. Mrs. Browning has written one of her lovely sonnets on this subject. She says:

> "Two sayings of the Holy Scriptures beat
> Like pulses in the church's brow and breast;
> And by them we find rest in our unrest,
> And, heart-deep in salt tears, do yet entreat
>
> God's fellowship, as if on heavenly seat.
> The first is JESUS WEPT; whereon is prest
> Full many a sobbing face, that drops its best
> And sweetest water on the record sweet.

> And one is where the Christ, denied and scorned,
> LOOKED UPON PETER. Oh, to render plain,
> By help of having loved a little and mourned,
> That look of sovran love and sovran pain,
> Which He, who could not sin, yet suffered, turned
> On him who could reject but not sustain."

Here is compassion. The story begins with the declaration that Jesus loved Lazarus. On the way to Bethany He speaks affectionately to the disciples of the dead man as "our friend." He is very tender in His interview with Martha and with Mary. At the tomb He groaned. The word used is a Greek word which expresses "a convulsion of indignant grief" at the power exercised on the earth by His arch enemy, who had for a time the power of death. He groans and weeps. The word used for this weeping is not the same as that used for the weeping of those about Him; it is also a different word from that used of His lamentation over Jerusalem. It is a word which signifies that the tears filled His eyes and fell quietly as He stood beside the sisters without speaking, a silent sharer of their grief. He wept, as someone has suggested, "because he disliked to call Lazarus back to the pain and the trouble of the earth."

But here is also Deity. Only Deity can raise the dead. *Lazarus came forth from the tomb.* Christ called him by name, *else all the dead would have come forth.* He had lain already in the tomb four days. The significance of this is lost to one who does not know the Oriental thought in connection therewith. The belief prevailed in the Orient that at any point until the beginning of the fourth day, the spirit might re-enter and animate the body. That hope was forever gone as soon as the fourth

day dawned. This makes clear the lament of the sisters as they sobbingly said, "He has been dead four days."

The account of the miracle bears within itself the most convincing proof of its authenticity. It exhibits in a perfect artlessness and tender humanity the unconscious touch of nature and of truth. No impartial reader but must be deeply impressed with its accurate circumstantiality. The marvelous consistency and naturalness of all its details, and the beautiful human life which it portrays cannot but powerfully affect the heart. It is a simple, straightforward telling of an event in the life of our Saviour. Its proof is beyond controversy. The details as given are minute and exact, offering the very best opportunity for verification. The witnesses were numerous, besides the two sisters, a body of their friends from Jerusalem. Mary and Martha were eager *not* to have these Jews present at the tomb. However, God overruled their purpose and brought them to the scene to witness the entire miracle, from the groan and tears of Jesus to His word of power, and the appearance of the dead man coming forth from the tomb. Here is compassion, and here is Deity!

Christ said, "I am, *I am,*" not "will be at the last day," but "*am now,* the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on Me though he die (physically), yet shall he live (spiritually); and whosoever liveth (physically) and believeth on me shall never die (spiritually)."

## Sermon IX

## "CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN"

(From the Painting by Plockhorst)

Scripture Lesson: *Matthew 18:10-14.*
*Mark 9:36-42.*
*Mark 10:13-16.*
*Isaiah 40:10-14.*

Text: *Mark 10:14*

*The Artist.*

Bernard Plockhorst was born March 2, 1825, at Brunswick, Germany. He studied in Munich and Paris. He settled in Leipsic where he worked for ten or twelve years, but later moved to Berlin, where he spent the latter part of his life. He is the artist of many famous religious pictures. "Mary and John Returning from Christ's Tomb," "Christ and the Adulteress," "Contest of the Archangel Michael and Satan," "The Exposure of Moses," "The Finding of Moses," "The Resurrection," "Christ's Farewell to His Mother," "Christ's Walk to Emmaus," "Christ's Appearance to Mary Magdalene," are numbered among some of his most widely known and most masterful works. He was a man of devout personal life. He had in his early boyhood an intense religious experience and dedicated his life to the proclamation of the Gospel in art. His portrayal of the person of Christ ranks next to that of Hofmann in technique. Like Munkacsy, he rejoices in abundance of color.

*What Is in the Picture?*

Here is

## I

## PROTECTION

(a) *Spiritual protection.* "Bring him to me" are the words of Christ as His disciples reported their unsuccessful experiment with the little boy possessed of a demon. That is the word of Christ through all the ages, relative to little children. If Christianity is the true religion, must we not of necessity bring our children to Him? Judah, in his plea to Joseph, said, "How shall I go up if the lad be not with me?" It is the question that all parents should ask of their own hearts as they consider their responsibility in connection with their children. How will we dare face the Father if these little lives which He has given us are not moulded and trained for Him? How shall we go up if the child be not with us?

Plockhorst, in this picture, is speaking eloquently out of his own experience. His mother had great influence in his life, introducing him as a child to Christ. Plockhorst knew what family worship meant in his mother's home. The sight of the Bible and the hearing of the Scripture was familiar to him. He was reared in a Christian atmosphere of faith and prayer. The young woman in the picture with the necklace and with her arm over the shoulder of her son is a portrait of his own mother.

The tragedy of many of our homes is that children are growing up spiritually illiterate. There are too many parents who *send* their children to Sunday School instead of *taking* them. The time invaribly comes in such cases when the children say to their parents, "If this means nothing to you, it means nothing to me." Certain definite obligations are assumed when parents bring children into the world,

not the least of which, by any means, is the obligation of spiritual training and nurture. Praying *with* and *for* a child, bringing him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord is at once a Holy responsibility and the highest privilege that God gives to people.

Sometimes one hears parents say, "I do not want to influence my child unduly. I desire that he should choose." Such talk sounds very liberal and big-spirited until it is analyzed, and then it is seen to be the sheerest kind of nonsense. *It is utterly foolish and senseless. We do not follow that course in any other of the important matters of life. Such an attitude rests on an entire misunderstanding of the character of life.* Forces and influences of evil are all around us. They are powerful. They are subtle. They are malignant. The child *is not going to be left alone to choose freely* no matter how much we might talk about it or wish that were the case. Every day of life and every hour of the day the child is subjected to corrupting influences; and if there is not a prayerful, systematic, and earnest application of the forces of good, mingled with faithful and intelligent prayer, patient and loving direction, active and persistent moulding of the life along the highest Christian lines, the forces of evil are going to predominate and control. The tender years of a child's life are the vital and formative years. Attitudes are formed, ideas are deep rooted and the whole bent of life is decided in those years. It is our solemn duty to train and to instruct the child. There is no protection for child life, no guarantee of its further development along worthy, useful lines in the world aside from Jesus Christ. *Every child has a right to be brought to Him* and heavy will be

the condemnation of those parents who do not so bring their children.

(b) *Physical protection.* In heathen countries unlikely infants are exposed to death. Christianity has always protected childhood physically. Byron was born with a club-foot. Spinoza was weak. Samuel Johnson was disfigured. Charles Sumter weighed only three pounds and a half. Sir Isaac Newton was so small he could have been put into a quart measure. Gibbon, Christopher Wren, DeCarte, Nelson, Kepler, Hugo, Washington Irving, Wilberforce, John Howard, were all unlikely infants and would have been allowed to die according to the custom of heathen countries. The fact that they were born in a country where Christ was known and His teachings followed, saved their lives.

In Sparta, sickly children were exposed on the mountain to death. In the jungles of Africa, twins are considered a curse, are thrown into the bush, and their mother exiled from human society.

No society expended money for milk for the use of slum children before Christ came. No organization of benevolent ladies provided clothing for destitute infants before Christ came. There were no homes of refuge for orphans before Christ came. There was no intelligent thought as to the physical care of babies before Christ came.

In heathen countries the death rate among infants is notoriously high. Since Christ lay in the manger at Bethlehem, childhood has been given its rightful place. Since Christ came in the form of a defenseless babe, babies all over the world have been welcomed, loved and cherished, given their chance for life and usefulness. Since Christ came, the cradle has become the dearest piece of furniture in the house.

(c) *Moral protection.* The evils of child labor were never discussed until Christ came and emphasized the value of childhood. All of the restraints which we have sought to throw about child life by law are a direct result of His protecting care. Many evils prey upon child life. Foul publications, unworthy amusements, falsely called recreations (a recreation is a pastime that *re-creates.* Many of our so-called recreations do exactly the opposite. They destroy physically, mentally and spiritually), and a multitude of insidious perils have been brought to the attention of men, and have engaged their earnest concern since Christ came to protect children.

Here is

## II

## MOTHER LOVE

Plockhorst here was painting out of his own personal experience. He was extremely fortunate in his own childhood home. There are few forces more powerful in life than a mother's love.

When the writer's father was making his campaign for an important political office, speaking over the state, he was approached by a mother who requested his co-operation in locating her son. At the close of every meeting which was addressed, his father made inquiry about this lad. He was finally discovered in the state penitentiary at Jefferson City. His mother came, took up her residence near the penitentiary, visited him every day that she was allowed to see him until his death. Shortly afterward, at her own death, she was buried, at her request, within the prison walls, by the side of the son.

These mothers in the picture are giving to the mother love in their hearts the most beautiful, the most wise, the most adequate expression that that love can ever receive, namely: bringing the little ones whom they love to the knees of the Saviour.

Here is

## III

## CO-OPERATION

*These mothers* are *bringing* the children to Christ. There is abroad in the church today a very serious heresy, namely: the idea that the minister or the Sunday school teacher, or those who are publicly set aside to discharge the church's business are *primarily* and *mainly* responsible for the spiritual training of the boys and girls of the congregation. Nothing could be farther from the truth. After the church has done its very utmost, the major responsibility and privilege rests with the parents. No Sunday school superintendent, however efficient and devoted, can take the place of an earnest, prayerful Christian father. No Sunday School teacher, however diligent and active, can take the place of a faithful, prayerful mother. It is only with the greatest difficulty, and in very rare instances, that a child is brought to useful Christian life if it has first to *get by or around* the unworthy example of a mother or father. The co-operation of parents should express itself not only in faithful work in the training and spiritual nurture of their children, but also in a hearty *expression on their part, of appreciation to the Sunday school teachers* who are assisting them. There are multitudes of faithful teachers in this country who are pouring out, day by day, in unstinting measure, of their spiritual strength and experience, their intellectual vigor, and their very physi-

cal life-blood, in training, teaching, encouraging boys and girls in our Sunday school classes. There are also multitudes of parents *who never once think* to express in hearty, cordial, grateful way their appreciation to these teachers. Little feet run most quickly and happily heavenward; little lives develop most rapidly and beautifully after the pattern of Jesus Christ, *only when there is the heartiest and closest kind of co-operation between parents and Sunday school teachers and officers.* The parents should *come with* the children to the Bible School. The child should be allowed to see that you are interested in these things *that you say* are so important for their lives. He will not very long *believe* them important, if your own attitude toward them is one of indifference, or cold, persistent neglect!

Here is

## IV

## PERSONAL WORK

Notice in the background of the picture how one mother, bearing her water pot, is directing, with outstretched arm, another mother to the Saviour. The cause of Christ, and the influence of Christ are extended in exactly the measure in which we engage in personal work, directing others to Him, who has proved the source of such transcendent joy and abiding peace in our own lives. We should *tell* what Christ has done for us and for our children. We are foolishly loquacious on other subjects, but on this topic of surpassing importance, many Christians are sinfully, and one might almost say, *idiotically,* reticent. This matter of personal work is the very basis of all our missionary enterprise. It is the heart of the extension of the kingdom and the spread of the good news. *It is not that we are to say to other in-*

*dividuals or nations, "See how much better I am than you."* We do not send our missionaries abroad with that message, but rather with this word. *"Christianity has helped us. It will help you."* There is no comparison *whatever,* implied in this as to the *present relative position* of the two individuals or of the two nations. It is, perhaps, not likely, but certainly conceivable that in many things, if not in all things, the *non-Christian individual might already be higher* in the scale than the Christian individual, or the non-Christian nation than the Christian nation. The comparison is, as I have suggested, *"He lifted us. He will* lift you." If the non-Christian individual occupies already a higher plane of morality, that position under the influence of Christ may still be raised. This is an extremely vital and important distinction, and one which should ever be borne in mind.

Here is

## V

## ADORATION

Notice the little child holding out the bunch of flowers to the Saviour. Childhood hearts are tender and easily touched. Of course, some worldly wise individual will say, "They don't know what they are doing. They don't know what it means." Such an objection is foolish, and sinful, and thoughtless. It is foolish because it does not take into account the fact that these tender years are the impressionable years, when tendencies and attitudes are established which will last through all eternity. It is sinful because Christ invited the little children to Him. We go directly contrary to His own word when we withhold from them the opportunity to come to Him. It is thoughtless because the one who

speaks has failed to realize that *the race moves forward upon the feet of little children.* The fold is the place for the lambs.

The writer recalls a story told by his boyhood Pastor of the farmer lad who was sent out to gather the sheep into the fold in the face of an approaching storm. He returned drenched from his work and reported that it was done. His father questioned him and discovered that he had gotten *all of the old sheep in* but had left the lambs out. The boy said he "didn't suppose that his father cared particularly for them." Whereupon the man replied, "Care for them? Why, child, the fold is the place for the lambs. The old sheep might look out for themselves, to some extent, but we must have the lambs within the shelter of the fold."

Many a parent has refused to let a child join the church, only, in after years, to weep his or her heart away because of a wayward son or daughter. Children may and should join the church when their hearts incline them to that action. William Gladstone's mother wrote to a friend, after William had joined the church at the age of eight, saying, "William has been soundly converted." Isaac Watts was a member of the church at nine. Charles Wesley became a Christian and joined the church when he was eight. Children differ, of course, in their development, spiritually, as well as physically and mentally. But it is usually a serious mistake to refuse to allow a child to declare his faith, and to become a Christian when he expresses a desire to do so.

Here is

## VI

## CONTRAST

This is a very suggestive touch which the artist has put in the picture, namely: the figure of the shepherd of the sheep, and Christ, the Shepherd of human souls. The shepherd of the sheep is standing to the extreme right in the middle background of the picture. It is Plockhorst's way of emphasizing the question asked long ago by the inspired writer when he said, "How much better is a man than a sheep?"

The writer visited, at one time, an Iowa farmer who very proudly showed him over his farm, calling particular attention to the splendid pedigreed live stock that he had. As they turned the corner of one building they came face to face with two young boys. "Who are they," he inquired of the farmer. "Oh, they are my sons, and they are going to the devil!" the man replied.

Roger Babson in his book, "Fundementals of Prosperity," tells a very similar incident of a man who boasted of his pedigreed stock, knowing the long line of descent for each animal, but who did not know *the name* of the young man who was occupying his daughter's time until the early hours of the morning.

The story is told of another Iowa farmer who crawled out of bed in the cold winter night, and who went out into the storm to discover what was disturbing his young thoroughbred hogs which were making a great deal of noise. After having attended to the matter, he came back. In a few moments the baby began to cry. He lay without moving and finally his wife got up to see what was the matter. After attending to her child, she came

back to her place and said, "Do you know the difference between the baby and those little pigs in the barn?" He replied that he did not. She said, "The daddy of the pigs is a thoroughbred!"

Many parents are vitally concerned in amassing wealth, or raising blooded stock, or caring for temporal things, while the most precious possessions of the world—their children—are being neglected. This picture gives sharp emphasis to that contrast. Valuable as sheep are, children are more valuable. Worthy and honorable as is the profession of the shepherd of sheep, more worthy and more honorable is the work of caring for little children.

Here is

## VII

## COMFORT

Is the little child gone? Has the little life which Christ gave, been taken from us? Are our arms empty? Plockhorst is declaring in this picture that they are in the Saviour's arms! He would write indelibly upon our hearts the words of the prophet Zachariah, "The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." (8:5.) Helen Hunt Jackson lost her husband, and a few months later, lost her little eight year old son. She returned from the funeral service and wrote this poem, which is one of the most tender and most beautiful in the English language:

"As tender mothers guiding baby steps,
At places where the little feet would trip,
Lift up the little one in arms of love,
And set them down beyond the harm;
So did our Father watch the growing boy,
Led o'er the stones by me,
Who stumbled oft myself,
But strove to help my darling on.

He saw the weak limbs faltering,
And saw rough ways before us
Where my arms would fail.
So, stooping from heaven, lifted the dear child,
Who smiled in leaving me,
And set him down beyond all harm,
Beyond my sight, and bade him wait for me.
Shall I not then be glad
And thanking God, press on to overtake?"

Isaiah, chapter forty, verses ten and eleven, present in a curious, and *extremely significant* juxtaposition, a description of God's power and of His tender love. These two verses emphasize that the mighty arm which rules the universe is the arm which also gathers, and tenderly carries the lambs. Plockhorst is eager to remind us that just as the devil has no happy old men, *so hell has no children. Every little child is in the Saviour's tender care, while living; and dying, is in His arms, eternally!*

## Sermon X

## "CASTING OUT THE MONEY CHANGERS"

(From the Painting by Kirchbach)

Scripture Lesson: *Matthew 21:12-17.*
Text: *Matthew 21:12-13*

The artist of this picture is Frank Kirchbach, a German, who was born in London in 1859. After studying in France and Germany, he went to Austria where he came under the influence of Munkacsy. Through all the middle period of his work he shows, in very marked degree, the influence of Munkacsy. In 1895 he received honorable mention at the Paris Salon, and from that time on was rapidly and increasingly recognized as an artist of unusual ability.

*The Picture.*

"Christ Casting Out the Money Changers" is perhaps Kirchbach's most widely known picture in America. It is one of those tremendous subjects in which Munkacsy delighted, and which Kirchbach handles with a degree of genius second only to the Hungarian master. There is much movement and almost a riot of color on the canvas. The picture itself was large, the figures being life size. Christ stands at the doorway of the temple, while before Him, the retreating forms of the money changers, whom He has displaced, move down the massive stone steps. It is interesting to notice that the artist uses here a device which Giotto often used, namely: a complete disregard of the archi-

tectural requirements of the building, in order to display the action going on within. The beholder will notice at once that architecturally there should be a second large pillar in the immediate foreground of the picture at the corner of the porch. This is omitted in order to give an unobstructed view of the action on the porch. The exigencies of architecture were completely ignored for the sake of the events themselves. Technically the picture is one that evidences the high degree of skill which Kirchbach possesses. The figure of Christ in the dazzling center of light is almost Rembrantesque in effect. The large building is a very typical example of Roman architecture with its deep portico or pronaos in front. The massive door gives entrance into a great, typically Roman, vaulted interior. Kirchbach knew Roman architecture, but the picture is, after all, an inaccurate reproduction of the temple which Christ cleansed. The temple which figures in the Scripture story is that one which Herod erected, in an effort to ingratiate himself with the Jews. He began the work in the eighteenth year of his reign, B. C. 20 or 21. Since the Levites only, in connection with the priests, were allowed, according to the ceremonial law, to work upon it, he employed thousands of men; with the result that the actual building operations of the temple itself required only a year and a half, although the outer courts surrounding it required fully eight years for their completion.

While there was about it an air of grandeur, it was small in comparison to Solomon's temple; a rather mean, hastily erected and somewhat pitiful building. It shamed the older Jews, so that they wept as it was dedicated, and as they recalled the magnificent building of the days of Solomon's glory.

In fact, it could not even compare favorably with the second temple, which had been built in 536 after the return from the exile. The first temple had been built of white, hard limestone which could be polished like marble. It was a rectangular building, sixty cubits long from east to west, twenty cubits broad, and thirty cubits high. But this temple of Herod's was neither so long, nor so broad, nor so high. Herod tried, however, to make it a worthy building, not so much because he wanted to honor the Jewish religion, as because he wanted to rear for himself a lasting memorial. The Jews were at first fearful of the project, believing that if the king pulled down their temple no other might be erected in its place. In order to allay this fear, Herod gathered all the material together before the work was actually to be done and then tore down and built up gradually as could be done. The expression used in John 2:20 where the Jews declared the temple was forty-six years in building is only figuratively true. The temple was in building still, of course, at that time, and was to continue at a rather long period from that time, due to the method just mentioned. Herod tried to make it a magnificent building, overlaying part of it with gold, employing in its construction, quantities of hard limestone which was capable of receiving a very high polish. But it was a rather poor attempt to duplicate the magnificent structure of Solomon. It was certainly no such beautiful building as Kirchbach has represented in this picture.

*What Is in the Picture?*

Here is

## I

## RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION

Christ is displaying the art of anger. It is an art. The Scripture instructs us, "Be thou angry and sin not." Eph. 4:26. Christ stands with the cords still tangled in His hand. There is not the slightest suggestion any place in the account that would lead one to believe that He used any degree of force. He did not strike anything or anyone. His command to evacuate the building was instantly obeyed, because of the sheer force of His moral indignation. His presence struck them dumb, filling them with fear. They cowered before the glance of His eye. They could not endure its blazing light. There is an anger that is wholesome. It clears the atmosphere and helps men to think rightly. It was such an anger that Christ here manifested. It was such an anger the apostle had in mind when he told the Ephesians to "Be angry, and sin not." Christ struck no blow. He employed no violence. He simply gave clear firm announcement to the right, and they fell before His presence like grass before the scythe. Here is the secret of the judgment day, of the condemnation of evil men and their consignment to hell. It is impossible for the evil-doer to stand in the light of the face of Christ. They cannot endure it. He does not send them away. They go away. He does not strike. They recoil, instinctively. It is *all inner.* It is *all inescapable.* It is *all inevitable.* It is *all spiritual.* The whole movement is *within the soul.* Each *goes* to the place and to the destiny for which he has been fitting himself through all the years. The judgment is pronounced within the individual himself. No external force or person decides it. *Therein lies the seriousness of*

*life.* Therein, the tragedy. *We become certain kinds of people. Our destiny is fixed by ourselves. This is the thought of Rev.* 22:11, *one of the most awful, most sobering words in Holy Scripture.* It is the thought of the poem:

"There is a time we know not when
A place we know not where,
That marks the destiny of man
For glory or despair.

There is a line, by us unseen,
That crosses every path,
Which marks the boundary between
God's patience, and His wrath.

The conscience still may be at ease
The spirit light and gay,
The thing that pleases still may please
And care be cast away.

Oh where is this mysterious bourn
By which our way is crossed
Beyond which God Himself hath said,
That he who goes is lost?

An answer from the skies is sent,
'Ye who from God depart,
Repent while it is called today,
And harden not your heart.'"

Each thought, action, motive of life, leaves its imprint upon the soul, and the *general character* of the soul determines the *ultimate destiny* thereof. Whittier has put the truth in beautiful and gripping way in his poem:

"No word of doom may shut thee out,
No wind of wrath may downward whirl,
No sword of fire keep watch about
The open gates of pearl;

"What if thine eye refuse to see,
Thine ear of Heaven's free welcome fail,
And thou a *willing captive be,*
*Thyself thine own dark jail?*

"O doom beyond the saddest guess,
As the long years of God unroll
To make thy dreary selfishness
The prison of a soul."

It is *all automatic.* It *is inner and spiritual.* Does someone say that *that lessens its importance?* Does someone think that that makes it *less real or terrible?* May God help such folk to *think!* Rather it increases, immeasurably, its deep dread and dire doom. One might possibly avoid some outer force. One might evade some mechanical power. But who can control the soul? Who can throttle conscience? Who can slay spirit? Who can describe the anguish of the soul out of and away from Him? "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and we cannot rest until we rest in Thee," declared Augustine.

Here is

## II

## GREED

(a) Here is greed that fights with its neighbors for wealth.

Notice in the foreground of the picture how even in this moment of ejection, one extortioner is exerting physical violence on another, while still a third and fourth scramble for the gold which is rolling down the stairs. It is the artist's vivid way of declaring that part of the anguish of hell will be the necessary and close association of the lost soul with its fellows; and that even in hell there will be an attempt on the part of lost souls to reap vengeance one upon another. If everyone in a city were

thieves, how pleasant life would be! If all were murderers, assassins and fornicators, how fair the city would be! The professional thieves would be the first and loudest to complain. Their nefarious business *is possible only because most people are not criminals. It is the righteous who are* the saviours of the city. Consider the awful condition of the lost, doomed forever to association with their own kind. Sin is cruel to the sinner, and to all of his companions. Sin is eternally selfish.

(b) Here is greed that deprives his neighbor of his due.

The significant fact about the picture may be easily missed if one is not familiar with the custom of that long-ago time. The outer court of the temple was that to which the men and women of foreign nations might resort for prayer. The inner court was reserved for the Jews. To this outer place there might come men and women of all conditions to call upon Him, whom the Jews were coming more and more, though very slowly, to recognize as the God of all nations. These hucksters had invaded, and *totally preempted this space, entirely shutting out from* any chance of worship, the very men and women to whom Christ's heart went out. The court where all the nations might come—*this was the court that greed had monopolized.* Christ's heart leaped for joy when certain Greeks inquired for Him. John 12:21. It was because, therein, He saw the beginning of His world-wide kingdom, and the first faint flush of the dawn of that day when all nations everywhere should call on His name. But what is a world-wide kingdom to greed? What are the needs of men to greed? Greed will reach out its dirty hands and take from men their only places of worship. Greed will block the only

gate to God and Christ and sneer while doing it. And while sneering and blocking the entrance, greed will rob the poor pilgrim of his money. That was what these men were doing, for

(c) Here is greed that robbed.

It robbed in two ways.

(1) The Jewish laws required that the pilgrims offer sacrifices. Many of them came from distances so great as to prevent the possibility of their bringing with them live offerings. Such people purchased their doves or goats or larger animals for sacrifices, at Jerusalem. *These hucksters saw to it that the price paid for these animals was exorbitant.*

(2) They robbed them again in demanding a *very high rate of exchange* for the money which these travelers brought with them. The payment for the sacrifice had to be made *in the coin of Jerusalem.* When the pilgrims from the distant provinces came up, and the money was exchanged, these men made sure that a very large part of it remained in their pockets. They were thieves pure and simple.

Christ was in no immediate physical danger while He debated with the Scribes and Pharisees. It was only when He put his hand upon the revenue of the priests, that He became a marked man. *When He touched the source of their graft and threatened to stop the flow of their filthy gain, they did not debate with Him. They killed Him.*

Here is

## III

## PITEOUS NEED

Notice the group of blind, halt, ragged, unkempt, needy people who are approaching from the left side, hesitating to step into the place cleared by the

departing traders, and yet plainly eager to do so. They are those who are in desperate need of His touch, of His love, and of His guidance. When greed and commercialism occupy the church there is no place for the poor, the lame, the halt, and the blind; but when greed and commercialism are driven from the sanctuary, then those for whom Christ died and over whom His heart yearns, have opportunity to draw near, and receive the blessing which He so earnestly desires to give them. *The church that is not giving birth to new souls is a church that is very soon going to give birth to heresies. Preachers and churches make their greatest and best mark in, and contribution to, the kingdom of God, when they keep close to the needy mass of humanity.*

Here is

## IV

## WINSOMENESS

Notice the mothers and children coming to Him. There was that about Christ which attracted children. There is no keener judge of character than a little child. One cannot for long deceive a child. The great and good men and women of the race have been those who have quickly and easily won and held the love and trust of little children. No more effective tribute could be paid to Christ than that *children loved Him.* It is always a severe test. Here they are coming to Him; and the interesting thing is that *the same face which drives the wicked men away in fear, draws the children with irresistible attraction.* Is it not a plain demonstration of a profound spiritual truth—*that which attracts righteousness, dispels iniquity!* It is the same sun which melts the wax and hardens the putty. The same gospel sermon sends some away *with sneers,*

but brings others forward *in tears!* It is the same gracious love of Christ outpoured upon human life that turns some hearts bitter and increases in others the joy and grace and gladness of living. This is Hawthorne's thought in "Mosses from an Old Manse" where he says, speaking of the beautiful pond lily:

"It is a marvel whence this perfect flower derives its loveliness and perfume, springing, as it does, from the black mud over which the river sleeps, and where lurk the slimy eel, and speckled frog, and the mud-turtle, whom continual washing cannot cleanse. It is the same black mud out of which the yellow lily sucks its rank life and noisome odor. Thus we see, too, in the world, that some persons assimilate only what is ugly and evil from the same moral circumstances which supply good and beautiful results—the fragrance of celestial flowers—to the daily life of others."

Our reaction is entirely dependent upon our own spirit.

Here is

## V

## STRANGE BLINDNESS

Notice, grouped just beyond the pillar and a little to the front of it, a company of old men who are members of the Sanhedrin. They stand here in the presence of this significant action, and debate some point of the law. They haggle over fine distinctions. They have eyes, but see not. They have ears, but hear not. They are strangely blind. They are wonderfully deaf. They see Him; but they never saw Him. They hear Him; but they never heard Him. They know Him; but they never knew Him. They seek to analyze Him. Here, in the presence

of one of the most drastic and significant actions of His ministry, they entirely miss the point. They are steeped in discussions. They are deadened by technical distinctions. They discuss Him. They debate about Him. They study Him. They criticize Him. But *they miss Him.* A botanist may tear a rose apart, petal by petal, and miss the greatest significance of the flower in his study of it. So they study Him and never perceive Him. Their hard hearts are untouched. They are hopeless. They are hard. They are unresponsive. They are lost—and the tragedy is *they do not know* it! It is only those of childlike spirit who may enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 19:14). It is possible to have much of the same spirit which animated these men today. We may lose ourselves in long theological debates about Christ. We may discuss His miracles, and work out elaborate harmonies of the gospels and tedious detailed arguments as to technicalities in His life and teaching, but miss Him. It is a peril of preachers. It is a peril of church workers. It is a peril of scholars. The rose is more important than botany. Christ is more important than theology. The simple, full enjoyment of the rose on the part of the little child is much nearer God's purpose than the detailed study of the botanist, worthy of course as that is. The full, unrestrained adoration of the heart for Jesus Christ is more important than a technical knowledge of theology, important as that is. These men were great scholars. They were religious leaders, *but they missed Him, through a strange blindness, or prejudice, or both.*

Here is

## VI

## PENITENCE

At the left hand of the door, having slipped up through the shadows, there stands a woman with her back turned to Him. She is evidently seeking to gather courage to approach Him. Her face is sad. Her hair hangs loose down her back. This is the eastern badge of the harlot. Kirchbach has put into her face not only sorrow, but desperate determination. She shrinks against the wall. She is afraid to draw nearer, but is driven on by an irresistible impulse. She is determined to do so. One cannot doubt that, at His hands, she receives full and free pardon. He drives out the crafty, the cheating, with scathing words, but to the fallen and repentant, to the sorrowful and needy, He has always words of welcome and of forgiveness. It is an extremely important touch which the artist has given us here. It is impossible to get *Christ excited about the so-called gross sins of the flesh.* The sins at which men and women hold up their hands in horror today *are the ones that Christ dealt with most kindly.* He forgave the woman taken in adultery. Let our thought be very clear. *He does not excuse it.* He does not condone it. He does not wave it aside and say it isn't important. *His sharpest words,* however, *His sternest, most unrelenting denunciation,* His keenest barbed thrusts, His wilting satire and withering *scorn were directed at and heaped upon those who were guilty of the so-called respectable sins,* sins which an elder of the church, an officer of the ladies aid, a respectable member of the congregation might commit day after day and remain in perfectly good standing in accepted society. The sins of selfishness, of greed, of hypocrisy, of covetousness, of deceit, of slander and false wit-

ness bearing, all of these *white-collared sins,* these sins that we are prone to excuse and minimize, *these are the ones which* called from Christ His most scathing denouncements and unsparing censure. He turned to the Scribes and Pharisees, *religious leaders of their time,* the eminently respectable citizens, and declared that the harlots would go into the kingdom before them! One can hear them gasp. There are people in our churches today, some of them occupying positions of prominence and influence, to whom Christ again would say the same words. Men and women who hold up hands in horror at some unfortunate brother, or sister, who has fallen victim to appetite, *but who are harboring in their hearts these respectable sins, which destroy not only body but also the soul, and are far more heinous in the sight of God than those at which they profess such horror.* This poor woman sought and found full forgiveness. Her sin, great as it was, was not for a moment comparable to the treachery and greed of these wicked men who are fleeing from the face of the Saviour. One is not excusing or minimizing her iniquity. One is seeking to examine it from the standpont of Christ's attitude toward it.

"God calling yet! Shall I not hear?
Earth's pleasures shall I still hold dear?
Shall life's swift passing years all fly,
And still my soul in slumber lie?

God calling yet! Shall I not rise?
Shall I that loving voice despise?
And basely, His kind love repay?
He calls me yet! Shall I delay?

God calling yet! I cannot stay!
I yield my heart without delay.
Vain world, farewell! From thee I part.
The voice of God hath reached my heart!"

The king of Spain kept as a body-guard a deaf and dumb man. When asked why he did so, he replied, "That man saved my life by awakening me at a time when I was in great danger." Tonight I have tried to awaken you who are unsaved to your great peril.

"Oh! Do not let the word depart,
And close thine eyes against the light,
Poor sinner, harden not your heart.
Thou would'st be saved! Why not tonight?

To-morrow's sun may never rise
To bless thy long deluded sight.
Now is the time. Oh, then be wise;
Thou would'st be saved! Why not tonight?

Our God in mercy lingers still;
And wilt thou thus His love requite?
Renounce at length thy stubborn will.
Thou would'st be saved! Why not tonight?

The world has nothing else to give;
It has no new, no pure delight.
Then try the way the Christians live;
Thou would'st be saved! Be saved tonight!

Our blessed Lord refuses none
Who would to Him their souls unite;
Then be the work of grace begun!
Thou would'st be saved! Why not tonight?"

## Sermon XI

## "THE ROAD TO CALVARY"

(From the Painting by Beraud)

Scripture Lesson: *Matthew 27:31,*
*Luke 23:26, 27,*
*Mark 15:20,*
*John 19:17.*

*The Artist.*

Jean Beraud was born in St. Petersburg, now the city of Petrograd, Russia, of French parentage, in 1849. He served with distinction in the Franco-Prussian War, after which he entered the Atelier of Bonnat, who was the only teacher he ever had. Beraud found material for his paintings in contemporary French life. The social customs and character of the time are represented in many of his canvases: the evening humor, the boulevards, and the swirl of the modern Parisian life interested and fascinated him. Most of his characters are modern Frenchmen.

*The Picture.*

His tendency is well illustrated in this picture, "The Road to Calvary." He plainly disavowed any intention of painting a scene that was enacted in Jerusalem nineteen hundred years ago. He has, rather, set forth the events of this tragic journey as they would be reproduced in a modern French city. He took the passage in Luke 23:27. and gave to it a vivid modern setting—"The company of people and of women which also bewailed and lamented

him." Said he, "It is nonsensical for painters to touch upon themes in which they have no belief, themes which could only have flourished in some epoch other than our own. Human passions, motives and emotions, however, do not change with the passing centuries. In depicting Christ on the road to Calvary, I have not imagined a scene enacted two thousand years ago, but such a scene as might be enacted today."

Canon Farrar suggests that love of horror led the painters of the Renaissance to exaggerate every incident which lent itself in any degree to the depicting of the horrible. Certainly there is no attempt at horror in this picture, but a very vivid modern representation of the forces of evil which hurried Christ along to His death.

*What Is in the Picture?*

Here is

I

IGNORANCE

The figure just ahead of Christ with the upraised arm is Ignorance. Ignorance is leading the procession. Had they only known! Had the soldiers known! The very prayer of the Saviour indicates that they did *not* know: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Had Jerusalem known! The exclamation of our Saviour as He swept around the corner of Mount Olivet into view of the city: "O Jerusalem . . . thou knowest not the things that belong to thy peace," indicates the ignorance of the city. If Pilate had known he might have been more manly.

The people were in ignorance of what was going on, else the priests and scribes could not have carried out their murderous purpose upon Him. Ignorance today is crucifying Him afresh. Ignorance

of His love, of His sympathy, of His purpose, of His winsomeness: these things retard the kingdom and give Him pain and crucify Him afresh. "If only I could picture Him clearly to the people, you could not hold them back from Him," Moody used to say, "When the Holy Spirit is able to drive back ignorance and to give Christ a chance at the heart, then He is almost sure to win. I say *almost*, for He will not win *all*. There are some who bar fast the gate of the heart and will never let Him in." Macefield, in his "Everlasting Mercy" has described the fact of conversion when Saul Kain, a village wastrel, a drunkard, poacher and prize fighter, finally consents to open his heart to the incoming Saviour. Christ is certain to win if we will drive back ignorance and give Him a chance. He is certain to be crucified if ignorance leads the way.

The picture contains three great contrasts. The souls of all men are divided along these lines. It is a setting forth of the great divisions into which all people fall at the approach of Christ. He came to send a sword, and the divisions revealed by men's attitudes to Him are clear and deep and eternal. Here is hatred contrasted with love. Here is sinful mockery contrasted with beautiful sorrow and worship, and here is false teaching of children contrasted with true teaching of children.

Here is

## II

## HATRED CONTRASTED WITH LOVE

(a) *Here is hatred.* Let it be clearly, if sadly, said that some hate Him. They are not filled with ignorance, they are filled with *hatred*. See the clenched fists just over the head of the weeping woman in the picture. See the faces in the dark

background, hideous with black and bitter hatred. The entire setting of the picture is one of blackness and despair. That is the subtle psychology of the artist. It is a black hour and here is hatred. The Sadducees hated him. The Priests hated Him. He was interfering with the source of their revenue. It is extremely significant to note that the Priests did not debate with Him. The Scribes and Pharisees did so, and at length, but when He laid hands on the source of the revenue that was filling the coffers of these bloated devils in priestly form, they did not debate with Him. They *killed* Him. Here is hatred, black, bitter, deep as hell, implacable. Hell itself must have blushed as it beheld it.

(b) *Here is Love.* See the man with his face in his hands. Hatred clenches the fist, love quenches the Saviour's thirst. Men are clearly divided through all eternity on these two lines. It is true that Christ today needs still the strength of men. When He said upon the cross, "I thirst," He meant of course, physical thirst, but certainly His words carry a greater significance than that. Is it not true that He is still today thirsting for the strong arm, the vigorous hand, and the broad shoulders of men that can bear the burdens of His cause? He seeks masculine minds who can plan with originality for the furtherance of His kingdom. He desires the resolute will which will carry out with courage the plans which are made, and the willing hand that gives ungrudgingly what is required for the advancement of His cause. In this contrast of hatred with love, we must remember that He had come to bring life, and in turn, they were giving Him ignominious death. His death was necessary, of course, in order that men should learn again the road to Paradise, that

they should be resurrected from sluggish folly, to the magnificence of the kingdom of heaven.

For nineteen hundred years men who have been born again in Christ, worthy to know Christ, to love Him and to be loved by Him, have wept as this man is doing at the memory of His trial and suffering, His ignominy and shame on this road to the cross. This strong man is telling his strength in his tears. But all our tears gathered together like a bitter sea do not compensate for one of the drops which fell red and heavy on the road to Calvary.

Here is

## III

## SINFUL MOCKERY

See the fashionably gowned woman who looks on and mocks. One involuntarily cries out, "Lord God, hide Thy face from such shallowness and sin." What can be done with persons who will stand in the presence of the supreme tragedy of the universe and laugh?

Here is the emergence in time of God's eternal heart-ache—and this woman laughs! When the choirs of heaven are hushed in very awe—this woman laughs! When the holy angels crowd the parapets of heaven to see the awful sight—this woman laughs! When the Son of God bends beneath the sins of the world—this woman laughs! When the eternal destiny of the race is in the balance—this woman laughs. While the heart of the Saviour is being crushed—this woman laughs. Fiend in human form! Even the devils believe and tremble—but this woman laughs! There are some souls so shallow, so contemptible, so steeped in iniquity as to have lost entirely the ability to respond to any high ideal or worthy motive. This woman was selfish,

shallow, flippant, sensual and damned. Nobody damned her. She condemned herself. A man who walks through an art gallery where are gathered priceless treasures of the world, and carelessly whistles and peers about casually, and then says to the guard, as he goes out, "Is this the best you have here?" is condemned automatically. No one has to condemn him. He is already condemned. This woman is a blot on the fair creation of God. A woman may be the most holy or the most damnable thing in the world. Here in this picture the two extremes are brought close together, for

Here also is

## IV

## BEAUTIFUL SORROW AND WORSHIP

See the woman with her head bowed, and the woman with her head thrown back, and her sister with shaded face, just behind. Christ has blessed and lifted womanhood, and devoted womanhood has, in turn, done much for Him. A woman was last at the cross and first at the tomb. It was *not* a woman who betrayed Him! The Scripture declares, "There followed Him a great company of women which bewailed and lamented Him." It is said there was a Jewish law forbidding the showing of sympathy to a condemned criminal. If so, this demonstration was all the more remarkable and creditable to those who took part in it. The up-welling of their emotion was too intense and sincere to be restrained by any custom or law. The fact is, there is no instance in Scripture of any woman being an enemy of Christ. No woman deserted Him. No woman despised Him. No woman persecuted Him. No woman opposed Him. Many women followed Him. Many women ministered to Him of their sustenance. Many wo-

men washed His feet with tears. They anointed His head with spikenard, and now, when their husbands and brothers are hounding Him to death they accompany Him with weeping and wailing to the scene of His martyrdom. It is a splendid testimony to the character of our Saviour on the one hand, and to that of woman on the other. Women's instinct told her, perhaps dimly at first, but none the lesss surely, that this was the deliverer for her. While Christ is the Saviour of all, He has been and is surely in special way, the Saviour of woman. At His advent, her degradation, which had been far deeper than that of man, was done away with. Wherever His gospel has traveled since then, it has been the signal for her emancipation and redemption. His presence evokes all the beautiful and tender qualities which are latent in her nature, and under His influence, her entire character experiences a transformation.

The church is realizing more and more the importance of the work of women. We read of deaconesses in the early church, and we are coming now, more and more, to give women their rightful place of responsibility in the work of His kingdom. Men pierced His feet with nails; women washed His feet with tears. Men heaped maledictions upon His head; women poured thereon rare perfume. Men crowned Him with thorns; women crowned Him with love. They are still most devoted to Him.

Here is

## V

## FALSE TEACHING OF CHILDREN

The false teacher is depicted in the figure in the right foreground. He is a professor who points jeeringly at the tortured Saviour, directing his stu-

dents to cast stones at Him. One boy is picking up a stone; two others have stones in their hands. There are many professors today who are doing exactly this thing. In the very schools which were born in the heart of the church, organized and founded at the cost of great sacrifice on the part of God's people, these destructive teachings are being instilled into the heart of our youth. In our great tax-supported universities, where we are not permitted to teach religion, we are allowing the teaching of atheism and infidelity. Recently the students in science of a California University voted on the question of singing hymns in assembly. The votes stood, yes, 72; no, 208. On the question of having the Chaplain speak on moral or religious subjects, yes, 110; no, 170. On the use of the Lord's prayer in chapel, yes, 112; no, 175. This is a concrete example of the drift away from religion, and especially significant and disappointing because it is by well educated young men—prospective leaders in the industries and families, of exactly the type to which we look to maintain the institutions and practices on which all human progress is founded. The newspapers gave this vote wide publicity, thereby increasing immesaurably, the damage done. Coming from a great place of learning, it carries authority and gives approval and comfort to the unthinking, crucifying Christ afresh. No one can doubt that it is the inevitable result of the teaching to which these young people have listened in the class room. Evidently it is in the minds of these young men that science should ultimately be substituted for all else, and when our day is done, the last word over our clay will be said by a professor of aeronautics from a text taken from Zowbusky on the fixation and isolation of air pockets, or something equally ger-

mane to the occasion! Science is a magnificent, material force, but it is not a teacher of morals. It can perfect machinery, but it adds no moral restraints to protect society from the misuse of the machine. It can also build gigantic intellectual ships, but it constructs no moral rudders for the control of storm-tossed human vessels. It not only fails to supply the spiritual element needed, but some of its unproven hypotheses rob the ship of its compass and thus endanger its cargo.

In war, science has proved itself an evil genius; it has made war more terrible than it ever was before. Man used to be content to slaughter his fellowmen on a single plane—the earth's surface. Science has taught him to go down into the water and shoot up from below and to go up into the clouds and shoot down from above, thus making the battle field three times as bloody as it was before; but science does not teach brotherly love.

Science has made war so hellish that civilization was about to commit suicide; and now we are told that newly discovered instruments of destruction will make the cruelties of the late war seem trivial in comparison with the cruelties of wars that may come in the future. If civilization is to be saved from the wreckage threatened by intelligence not consecrated by love, it must be saved by the moral code of the meek and lowly Nazarene. His teachings, and His teachings alone, can solve the problems that vex the heart and perplex the world.

We may not like the fact, but it cannot be denied, that Christianity is on the defensive every day of its existence, and must fight constantly and valiantly. These things are not questions of conservatism or of liberality in theology. Much less are they questions of so-called fundamentalism or modernism.

They are questions of *Christianity and Anti-Christianity.* A great liberal preacher of Chicago says "No one can justly accuse me of being an educational or religious reactionary, and yet, I say, it is only too true that the church is facing, in this crisis, one of the greatest perils and most difficult problems in its history. In our zeal to make our schools strictly non-sectarian, we have enacted great volumes of laws and 'lean over backward' in an attempt to be fair to all religious beliefs. But we allow every kind of false theory and religion to be promulgated in our schools. Now we discover that the very moral foundations of the Republic are sinking, as President Hoover has recently pointed out."

A high School Sophomore said to her parents the other day, "Say, this Buddhist religion is a great thing, isn't it?" Some silly teacher had been extolling Buddhism. But Christianity cannot be taught!

Professor George B. Foster, of the University of Chicago, declared in his book, "The Finality of the Christian Religion," "God Outside the Cosmos Is Dead," and proceeded to reduce God to the omnipresent principle of nature. One of the standard books of the so-called New Thought Philosophy recommended in one of our universities, starts out with the statement, "My highest self is God."

Universities founded by earnest Christian people, who gave out of their poverty and love for the organization and establishment of the school, and adopted for it the slogan, "For Christ and the Church," have today professors who are directing the stoning of Christ on the road to Calvary. Over the doors of such universities should be written the word "Ichabod," for the glory is indeed departed!

One of the professors of Johns Hopkins and the

followers of his Behaviouristic Philosophy, would take away all sin and responsibility from man and reduce him from a free and responsible moral agent to an automaton; a jumping-jack which kicks its legs when the string is pulled, while an instructor of Columbia announced recently before a learned scientific society that we need a new Bible, and that sin is a delusion. Still another professor teaches his lovely young women that God, immortality and the soul are mistakes of the older and outworn psychology. One does not wonder at the distressing situation which Judge J. F. McIntyre pointed out, indicating that ninety-five per cent. of the criminals of this country were under twenty-four years of age, and called upon the people to instill into the hearts of their children some kind of religious instruction. A young graduate of the University of Chicago recently confessed to the writer that out of a large group of her immediate associates on the university campus, she was the only one who ever attended religious services during the four years of her course.

What we need today is to have again a clear vision that will shatter our smug complacency and self-deification, and stab our spirits wide awake to the reality of the great God, high and lifted up, as Isaiah saw Him. Because God is not thus lifted up today, worship tends to become cheap and tawdry.

The greatest need of this age is to see a great and holy God. Saul of Tarsus caught a vision of the glory of the divine Christ, and while it blinded him for a time, nevertheless the splendor and glory of it transformed him from a narrow, bigoted Pharisee into a gentle Christian and a world statesman with catholic sympathies and matchless powers. Chrysostom, Augustine, Savonarola, Luther, Knox, Spur-

geon, Moody, were all made great by the greatness of their vision of the glory of God. It is in reality a choice between God and Baal. It is a renewal of the issue in Pilate's hall and of the scene on the Road to Calvary. It is a contest between force and Christ.

Here is

## VI

## TRUE TEACHING OF CHILDREN

It is true that Beraud was a Catholic, and he pictures these children as under the training and instruction of the church, represented by the Nun in the extreme left foreground. It is also true that most of us are not prepared to go as far in this matter as does the Roman Catholic Church with its parochial schools. But have we not gone far to the other extreme? These little ones are kneeling in reverent worship. They are receiving an impression which will remain forever and which eternity only can measure.

"I took a piece of plastic clay
And idly moulded it one day.
And as my fingers pressed it still
It gave and yielded to my will.

I came again when days were past,
The piece of clay was hard at last.
The shape I gave it still it bore
And I could change it nevermore.

I took a piece of human clay
And formed it gently day by day;
I moulded it with power and art
A young child's soft and yielding heart.

I came again when years were past,
The child had grown—a man—at last.
The form I gave him still he bore
And he could change it nevermore."

In most of our Protestant Sunday Schools we have abandoned the teaching of the Catechism, and tell, instead, pleasant little stories of how Mary helped mother, and how John was kind. This is all very well, but we *stop* there, and character is not undergirded by such milk and water instruction. Let us get into the child's mind and heart the *beautiful,* the theologically and scientifically *accurate* words of the shorter catechism and of the *Scriptures.* Then he will have an anchor for his soul. Let him learn, and hide in his heart the words, "Repentance is a saving grace whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of and endeavor afterward to obedience." Then if he falls, in some terrific temptation, these words will come, like ministering angels, to lead him back to the Father's house.

## Sermon XII

## "CHRIST IN GETHSEMANE"

(From the Painting by Hofmann)

Scripture Lesson: *Matthew 26:36-40.*
Text: *Matthew 26:39*

*The Artist.*

The reader is referred to the chapter on "The Christ" for an account of Hofmann's life and work.

### I

*The Technique of the Picture.*

This is one of Hofmann's most widely known and most frequently copied paintings. The dim forms of Peter, James and John, are seen in the background, with the faint outlines of the city of Jerusalem discernible on the distant hill under the lowering night clouds. The face of Christ is illuminated by a light which comes from above. It is the only light in the picture save that which gathers around the head of Christ, and one faint gleam that breaks through the clouds. It is a lonely desolate spot. Gethsemane was located upon the Mount of Olives, an eminence 2,682 feet high. In all probability this was a private garden owned by some friend of the Master's, a place to which He was accustomed to resort. The thorny bush, with its stark dead branches and leaves, and its savage thorns, is a graphic touch on the part of the artist, and typifies the thorn and curse of sin which is in the world as a result of the fall in the Garden of Eden. Here in the garden of Gethsemane is the beginning of the agonizing

process of retrieval. This is suggested also in the barrenness of the scene. Not a spear of grass! Christ kneels on a bare rock, that throws back glaringly the reflection of the heavenly light.

The garden of Gethsemane is now owned by an organization of the Roman Catholic Church known as the Franciscan Order. They secured control of the garden in 1681. There are in the garden, eight large olive trees, the circumference of which ranges from twenty-four to thirty feet. The Moslems have never levied any tax upon this ground, and by the inhabitants of the city and especially by the Franciscans, the trees are venerated as the most holy in the world. There is one of them that is designated "The Tree of the Agony," as that under which the Saviour prayed and suffered.

II

There are two gardens which are sacred to the Christian heart. The first is that garden where man fell—the garden of Eden. The second, that garden where man was redeemed, where Eden's defeat was turned to victory—the garden of Gethsemane, for after Gethsemane, the cross was easy! This is the garden of mystery and of pain. Thought must prostrate itself here. There is a very real sense in which we should even hesitate to talk of it. Does coarse language have any right here? How dare we seek to enter into the mysteries of that holy place, that awful hour when the secret doors of His soul swung open, and His spirit issued to do battle with the forces of evil? Who can understand it? Can one hold the sea in a cup, or empty the azure of heaven into a child's hand? No more is human thought capable of penetrating to the heart of this mystic and tragic hour when the Son of God struggled in

Gethsemane. Yet, in another sense, we *must* enter, for here are great life lessons which He would have us learn.

*What Is in the Picture?*

Here is

## III

## LONELINESS

He had left eight of His disciples at the entrance to the garden, taking only Peter and John and James with Him. Here He has withdrawn even from the three and is facing this crisis alone. Every great soul in human history has been lonely. Genius withdraws from the crowd and thinks out the problems of life alone. It is an experience which is not limited , however, to genius. Alone we are born. Alone we die. Every great decision and crisis of life we must face alone. There come hours when the advice and companionship of friends do not avail, where decisions have to be made and burdens have to be borne alone. Jacob, Scripture says, in that trying experience at Jabbok, *was left alone.* David, after his tragic sin, and the death of the child, *was left alone.* And so we are all left alone with our *sin,* alone with our *conscience,* alone with our *problem,* alone with our *destiny,* alone with *God.* If that is *our* experience, how much greater must have been the utter aloneness of the unfathomable soul of the Saviour as He came to this tragic hour?

> "His heart craved sympathy,
> But He was alone.
> He was fighting the battle for all the race,
> And He was alone.
> He was pitted against all the powers of hell,
> And He was alone.
> He was lonely—desperately lonely!"

Here is

## IV

## UNCERTAINTY

Hofmann has suggested it in the upturned face of the Saviour as He pours out His soul in prayer. While it is utterly impossible to describe with any degree of fullness, or even of accuracy, what went on in the heart of the Saviour in Gethsemane, we know, certainly, that there was in His heart an element of uncertainty. Here was renewal of the intense debate which had begun in His temptation in the wilderness.

In the upper room He had been utterly composed. He had stepped out across the brook Kedron, where the blood from the sacrifice of the temple altars was drained. Perhaps at the very moment Christ crossed it, it was running red, bringing to His mind the bloody sacrifice of which He was to be the chief figure. It may be that that began the debate in His mind—the question as to whether or not this was indeed the way. He certainly did not repent His decision. He had "set His face steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem." His words belie any repentance or regret. It cannot be that He had a sudden case of nerves. He was perfectly calm before; and five minutes later when He faced the rabble of Judas, He was the only composed and unflurried person in the group. A nervous breakdown does not work that way. It cannot be that He was overtaken by a fiery gust of self-pity, for while Christ loved life, the world and its ways had no hold upon His heart. He lived His entire span of years holding loosely to the interests and possessions which most men hold extremely dear. One cannot escape the conviction that it was the sheer shame of the cross. We must take into consideration Christ's own thought of Him-

self and His mission. He came to win and redeem the world for God. It was a great dream and should be nobly fulfilled. And now, to perfect this high dream, God is offering Him a cross! The cross was the emblem of shame! It was the mark of the ancient curse. A cross was where they butchered slaves! It was on a cross that they slew their rogues! Why should there not have been uncertainty in His thought? His human nature rebelled at the suggestion. Was it possible that God wanted Him *to go to a cross, to redeem the world?*

When we contrast this starless night with the glorious dawn of His baptismal day, we can understand the question in His heart. There was no question here of *refusal* to pay that price, *if* that were the price that was necessary, but there is *uncertainty* as to whether that *is* the road. It is much as though a father set out to find a lost child. After spending all day in the search, the little one is finally discovered on an island in the midst of a stream filled with the sewage of a great city. The father sees and recognizes his little child and is determined, of course, upon his rescue, but is it going to be necessary for him to plunge into that seething mass of sewage? There is no question in the father's heart as to the course that he will pursue, *if* that is the only course possible. He will certainly plunge in and swim to the rescue of his child. But to have to take that way! It is not a beautiful illustration to be sure, but it is at least graphic and expresses in a very slight degree the horror and recoil of the Saviour's heart as He came face to face with the cross. There is no hesitancy on the part of Christ as to the fulfilling of His mission, but *to have to do it through a cross!* The more highly men think of themselves and their mission, the more insistent

they are upon a proper recognition of themselves and of their work by the world. Christ, *being* what He was, *knowing* Himself to be the Son of God, conscious in a greater degree than we can ever be of the vast importance of His work, must have recoiled from the shame of the cross in a way utterly unfathomable to us.

Livingston cried out in his experience in Africa, "Light, Lord, Light! Is this the way you wish me to go? Give me light!" It was part of Christ's humanity that He too, must seek for light and guidance.

Was that, after all, the way?

Here is uncertainty.

Here is

## V

## AGONY

Our thought here must be very clear. Was He afraid to die? Was He afraid of the physical suffering involved in death? One thinks of Lattimer and of Ridley, of Servitus and of multitudes of other followers of the Saviour, who met death gladly; who smiled at the flames; who went singing through days of torture; who plunged willingly into pots of boiling oil; who sang as the fagots blazed about them. Was Christ less brave? A man in a Sunday school class taught by the writer, said, "If I knew that I was going to rise from the dead on the third day, I would not be afraid to die. Why was Christ so overcome with grief, so deeply troubled?" The question, as we will see, was extremely superficial. Christ was not less brave than His followers. It was not the physical agony from which He recoiled. It was a spiritual agony. It was agony that came from His battle with sin. Here in this garden of

mystery and of pain, He is like one on some strange island of enigma. Wild seas of terror are surging in from the deeps of infinite night and are engulfing His soul. The billows are colored with ignorance, with superstition, with malice, with envy, and hatred, with every evil and loathsome thing. He seems to be islanded and alone in the universe. He sinks under the sweltering, crushing mass of the world's sin. The very skies drip horror. His soul is stifled under the stench of sin. This sin makes the pure and earnest hearted among us recoil in dismay. What must, then, have been its effect upon Him, the sinless Christ, to find His spirit flooded with the putrid billows of evil.

He is bearing here not only the spiritual evil of the world, but is facing and bearing also its physical evil—the mercilessness of nature, the crashing and crushing of the wild elemental forces that have always wrought havoc upon man and beast. These elements added to His problem, and to His suffering. They are, to be sure, not the more important parts thereof but played a very definite part. Most important was His direct and deliberate conflict with the forces of evil. He came here at close grips with the strange, weird, preternatural, antagonist. From the moment He entered into the garden, He was aware of this dread thing, hiding like a grim specter in the background, when it was not writhing in the foreground, and on this night it impressed Him with unspeakable horror. Here is the Son of God face to face with evil. He is enfolded in the darkness, behind and within the darkness. All the powers of hell are released against Him. "He enters upon a struggle which threatens to tear reason up by the roots. He was braver than the bravest. He was more heroic than the most heroic," but here

the Lord Jesus is face to face with a foe of such horrible force, of such implacable hatred, of such subtle cunning and fierce rage, a besieging, touching, loathsome antagonist, of such spiritual strength that the contest drew from Him the heart breaking cry, "Let this cup pass from me." Terms like courage, bravery, martyrdom, heroism have no place in this scene, because they contain no meaning big enough to fit His experience.

"Deep waters have come in, O Lord.
All darkly o'er thy human soul;
And clouds of supernatural gloom
Around Thee are allowed to roll.

And Thou hast shuddered at each act
And shrunk with an astonished fear
As if Thou coulds't not bear to see
The loathsomeness of sin so near."

Who can see this terrific struggle, and deny the power of sin? Who can hear this heart breaking cry, and deny the reality of sin? Who can witness this agony of Jesus, and say that we live in a make-believe world? The very angels of heaven held their breath during this contest. No teacher can be a true friend of truth and speak lightly of sin. We may excuse it. We may apologize for it. But let us remember that the dread dire fact is here—an opiate in the will, a frenzy in the imagination, a madness in the brain, a poison in the heart. Culture can never extract it. Art can never conceal it. Indifference can never forego it. Foolish cults can never clear it away. Philosophy can never explain it. Reason can never deny it.

Here is

## VI

## VICTORY

On the ground that was red with His life's blood He won the victory. "Nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt." These are words of triumph. Sin slinks back conquered by the Master's hand. "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." This is not Stoicism. This is not mere submission. This is not passive acquiescence. It is the power of a soul linked with God. At that word the angels burst into rapturous song. The fight was won for you and for me. Our fate had been in the balance in that garden. He won the victory because He yielded.

Philosophers tell us that the universe is plastic, capable of endless modifications. Surely then, the supreme soul of the universe cannot be rigid. Steeple-jacks say that every well-built tower is notable for its capacity to sway to and fro. "The tower of Old Trinity in New York sways eighteen inches every time an electric train passes. It is said that St. Paul's tower sways in a storm like a beautifully balanced cradle. When the wind blows very hard the Washington Monument sways between four and five feet." If these towers had been built rigidly, they would long since have fallen. They must have yielding power. "Perhaps you don't know it," says an author, "but the better a steeple is built, the more she sways. You want to look out for the ones which stand rigid. There is something wrong with them. Most likely they are out of plumb." So it is with the soul threading its pilgrimage through the bewildering ways of God. We ascend height after height of our life only to learn that there are still greater heights beyond. Not by exclusion, not by negation, not by selfishness, but by going forward

a little, "by falling upon the face," by yielding, by leaning, by acquiescing, we grow. "Not as I will but as Thou wilt." We conquer by yielding.

Much of the distress of life comes from a failure to realize the power of humility. "Life resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." There are many victories we never can win except as we yield. We use mechanical and physical forces by mastering them, but we can enter into the richness of spiritual forces only as we allow them to master us. We cannot know beauty by dominating it. We know beauty, both the beauty of nature and the beauty of holiness, by a deep inner surrender wherein the soul yields itself to the sovereignty of a spiritual value. We feel that we must master life and make it serve us, then when disappointment and distress come, we stand, bitter and rebellious, and feel that we have been betrayed by life. We have resented life's compulsions and fought against them. This is not the proper technique of living. Grief is no more an intruder in the palace of life than is joy; loneliness no more than love.

Surely the Master had something of this kind in mind when He declared we should go two miles instead of one. We should take sorrow by the hand and say, "I will go with thee, opening my heart to every lesson thou doest give, and will learn from thee all that thou cans't teach me." We gain nothing by kicking against the pricks. It is only in a humble surrender to the spiritual forces of life that our hearts and souls are enlarged. It is by yielding that we grow, by submission that we develop and are led from beauty unto beauty. This is what Christ meant when he declared that the meek inherit the earth. They are the only ones who ever can or ever will inherit the earth.

Christ was able to do this because He found Fatherhood in the universe. The secret of it all is in that word—Father! That was the pillow on which He laid His throbbing temples. "My eyes are red, I cannot see. The load is heavy, I cannot walk. The way is rough, I stumble and fall. But oh! my Father!" To the soul that has found Fatherhood in the universe nothing is impossible.

The story is told of a scientist who was eager to secure a specimen of a lovely flower which he had discovered in the mountains. It was in a place accessible only by means of lowering an individual over the precipice. After much inquiry, he found a little boy who agreed to go "if," said he, "you will allow my father to hold the rope."

There is no depth of sorrow through which we need fear to go; there is no heart-breaking problem which we need fear to shoulder, because we *know* our Father, and He holds the rope! Here is loneliness, uncertainty and agony, but here is also victory through the yielding of the will to a Father who knows, who cares, and who keeps.

## Sermon XIII

### "CHRIST TAKEN CAPTIVE"

(From the Painting by Hofmann)

Scripture Lesson: *John 18:1-13.*
Text: *John 18:12.*

*The Artist.*

The reader is referred to the sermon on "The Christ" for a discussion of the life and work of the artist Hofmann.

*The Picture.*

This picture was painted near the close of Hofmann's life. He died in 1894, at the age of seventy. Hofmann always considered this picture one of the supreme efforts of his life. He dealt, ordinarily, with themes of joyous love and Christ-like tenderness. He very seldom attempted to depict a scene of tragedy such as this. His pictures "Christ in the Temple," "Sermon on the Mount," "Christ and the Woman of Samaria," "Ascension," "Omnipresence of Christ," "Christ Teaching from a Boat," etc., depict scenes of tranquil beauty, and of tender and deep emotion. Hofmann declared that he was inspired to undertake this painting by a renewed study of the New Testament, particularly that part of it which describes the closing scenes in the life of our Lord.

He received, in the early days of his life, great inspiration from the reading of the Bible in his father's home. He remained to the end of his life

a profound Bible student, an ardent believer, and a faithful and most earnest Christian man.

He painted this picture, it is said, with the tears coursing down his cheeks, and certainly, he has put into the scene more tragedy, more vivid dramatic action, more delineation of character, more forceful and eloquent speaking, more startling portrayal of the forces of hell arrayed against the forces of heaven, than in any other of his work, except it be "Christ in Gethsemane."

The canvas is one of the largest which he ever attempted, and is painted in the most vivid colors—blue, red, black, white, gray, orange, green and brown. There are flashes of purple, some indigo and some violet, in the original. It suggests one of Munkacsy's paintings, in its tragic, pent-up, tense atmosphere. In spite of the fact that it is an out-of-door scene, with a rather far horizon, the whole atmosphere of the picture is one of tension. This is caused, partly, by the fact that the background is a high hill, covered with dense wood, only at the extreme back may be seen the first faint flushes of the early dawn. Hofmann is depicting here the arrest of Christ which took place very early in the morning, perhaps between three and four o'clock, of Friday, the festal day.*

*What Is in the Picture?*

Here is

## I
## INDECISION

Just behind the man who bears in his right hand an uplifted torch, Hofmann has pictured one of the

*See the "Trial of Jesus" by the author, for a discussion of the legal phases of the arrest, and the hearing which followed the arrest, together with a discussion of the time of the arrest.

soldiers, who turns with his back toward us, and looks intently at Peter. This was Hofmann's painting of Malchus, whose right ear Peter had cut off, and whose injury had been healed by the touch of the Saviour (John 18:10). Influenced by the Saviour's act, Malchus turns toward Peter, and debates throwing his lot with the forces of this Man, whose gentle act of sympathy and of healing had won his heart. It is one of the most lovely, psychological touches in the picture. It is a vivid representation of the attitude of mind and heart of one who is almost persuaded to become a Christian. If Peter had been quick, eager and alert to follow the leadership and example of his Lord, Malchus would have been won to Christ! Peter had cut off the ear. Christ healed the ear. And now Malchus is turning to Peter, to see what his reaction to His Master's act will be. Peter hesitates; and in that moment of hesitation, his opportunity to influence Malchus for the Saviour is lost. If, with generosity, and eager acceptance of Christ's loving spirit, Peter had advanced toward this man, and had welcomed him with brotherly spirit, he might have been won for the company of Christ's disciples. We might have had in our New Testament another book, a gospel written by Malchus!

Of course, one must point out that Peter's hesitancy does not altogether excuse Malchus. Malchus had had sufficient evidence, in the presence, and in the healing work of Jesus Christ. He should not have based his decision entirely upon the action of one of Christ's disciples. He cannot escape a certain measure of just condemnation for having done so. Neither, however, can Peter escape a share of the condemnation for his own attitude of hesitation and of indecision.

One of the most sobering thoughts of life is that of the constancy of our influence. Every moment of our lives we are influencing other lives for good or for evil. This constant stream of influence emanates from us entirely irrespective of whether we are conscious of it. Even in our most forgetful moments we are exercising a powerful influence upon others. Every Christian man and woman should pray that that influence may be always for the highest and for the best. We can find much in the situation here—the turbulent scenes through which Peter had passed; the almost overpowering crisis of the moment; the sheer physical exhaustion of his body; the mental bewilderment to which he had fallen victim; to excuse him in this particular case. The tragic fact of the matter is, however, that in spite of all of these things, his influence here is against Christ. In that hour of test, he failed! And his failure lost for the company of disciples another follower! Peter perhaps was entirely unconscious of this fact. He may never have realized it. His influence was going out and he was unconscious of the fact. It was exerting itself in an adverse way. And he did not realize it!

Here is

## II

## HATRED

It is depicted upon the face and in the entire attitude of Caiaphas, who stands at the extreme right of the picture, facing the observer. His arms are folded across his chest. He stands in an attitude of haughty superiority. Hatred is evident in every line of his face; in the glare of his eyes; in the stern set line of his mouth; in the haughty arrogant tilt of the chin; in the entire posture of the body. He hated Christ. He also feared the people. For that

reason he had sent his temple guard out into the darkness of the night to arrest the greatest Friend the people had ever had. He had so far forgotten his dignity in the intensity of his hatred as to accompany the mob, and personally to supervise their arrest of the Saviour.

The Roman procurator, Valerius Gratus, during his period of office, changed the high priest five times. He deposed Annas and gave the office alternately to one of his family, and to one of the family of a rival house. Large sums of money, no doubt, filled his coffers at each transaction. He, however, was no more unworthy nor unprincipled than these men whom he appointed to the office of high priest. Annas and his son-in-law, Caiaphas, who is pictured here, together with others, who were appointed to the office of high priest by the Roman procurator, were thoroughly dishonorable men.

This man's full name was Joseph Caiaphas. He had been appointed in 25 A. D., when Jesus was twenty years of age, and continued to hold office until 36 A. D., when he was removed, by the consul Vitellius, shortly after the recall of Pilate. He was a contemptible creature of the Romans, and commanded very little respect from the Jewish people as a nation, although his official position secured him a certain measure of dignity. He had openly advocated the death of Jesus Christ (John 11: 47-54). He was known among the people as "Caiaphas the Oppressor." His servants beat the people with staves. Every kind of thievery and of corruption was committed by his servants, under his instigation. He was a worthy son-in-law of the crafty Annas. Intrigue and unwearied plotting were the very life of Annas and his son-in-law, Caiaphas, and all their house. They were gliding, deadly, snake-

like; and the subtlety with which they laid their plans and executed them, was a wonder even to their own generation. The people had given them the by-name of "hissing vipers." Jesus Christ looked upon him and said, "It is your hour, the powers of evil work, by choice, in the dark."

Here is

III

DEEPEST SPIRITUAL IGNORANCE

Hofmann has represented this appalling spiritual ignorance by the man who holds aloft the flaming torch. *He has brought a light, wherewith to search for the light of the world!* No words could more vividly describe the stark spiritual darkness of this individual, whose face is dull and heavy. Notice the brutish look upon his countenance; the coarse vulgar mouth; the dull eye, and the ugly nose; the insolent look of curious stupidity; the ape-like outward thrust of the lower jaw. Here is spiritual illiteracy in all its repulsiveness. One is reminded of Edwin Markham's poem, "The Man With the Hoe," in which he describes a brutish individual. "God made man in his own image, in the image of God, he made him." But here is something which, while in the shape of man, lacks all of those finer sensibilities of mind, of heart, and of soul, which characterize man.

"Is this the Thing the Lord God made, and gave
To have dominion over sea and land;
To trace the stars, and search the heavens for power;
To feel the passion of Eternity?

Down all the caverns of Hell, to their last gulf
There is no shape more terrible than this—"

Here is

## IV

## GREED

Judas, the thief, still grasps the bag! He clutches it with convulsive grasp. Christ, Himself, knew that Judas was a thief. In tender and constant kindness He had sought to win him from the evil of his way. But so powerful is the personality of man that it may repel even the loving, persistent advances of the Son of God.

There have been many attempts to explain away the action of Judas. Some have declared that he was only trying by bringing about a crisis, to *compel Christ to assert Himself,* and to exercise His supreme power. Many excuses have been made for him. None of them, however, are plausible. There is, in all of the Judas story, the jingle of coins. Greed has laid his ugly hand, and left his repulsive imprint upon the entire record. Hofmann has indicated this in a fascinating, psychological way. Notice that the bag of money hangs on the side of the bar *away from Christ.* It is as though the money bag itself was pulling Judas away from Christ, and preventing his near approach to him! Greed had corrupted the heart and spoiled the life of this man. It was covetousness that lay at the root of all his spiritual trouble, and resulted in his everlasting doom. Covetousness is a white-collared sin. It is "the sin we are afraid to mention." It is the sin to which are addicted many of our leading church officers and members! It is the sin so easily and readily excused. It is the sin of respectability. A man cannot be a drunkard and be an office-holder in the church. There are many church office-holders, however, who are covetous; and that, in the sight of God, is, perhaps, even more deadly than drunken-

ness. It is significant that Jesus Christ never grew excited about what we call "the grosser sins of the flesh." He did not, to be sure, condone them, or excuse them. His sharpest words, however, were said to the most religious people of the times—the Pharisees and the Scribes; and His denunciation of them was based upon their inward hypocrisy; their covetousness; the sins of the spirit; the sins that are not apparent on the surface, but which lie down deep in the life and heart. Christ warns us against this sin of covetousness (Luke 12: 15). In I Corinthians 5: 10, the covetous man is thrown into some very interesting and suggestive company! This is a most subtle sin. It eats out the heart; it stifles every spiritual aspiration; it paralyzes the will. Under its influence the moral fibre deteriorates and becomes flabby; the soul is filled with a miasmic vapor in which nothing is seen white or black, but all is gray. All the while the individual may be posing as a religious leader. But the heart is hollow; the life is a sham; there is no vitality in it; no peace or power. Ephesians 5: 3 places the sin in its proper category. Adultery and the vilest uncleanness are no more vile in the sight of God than a covetous spirit.

Da Vinci, in his picture, "The Last Supper," has conveyed the same suggestion—the convulsive gripping of the money bag by the hand of Judas. De Mille pictures the same thing in his photoplay, "The King of Kings."

The soul of Judas was lost because of covetousness.

It was money that kept him away from Jesus Christ.

It was greed that brought his soul to hell.

Here is

## V

## FORCE OF LOVE vs. FORCE OF ARMS

It looks as though love were defeated. It always appears so at first.

But where are these soldiers today?

Where is Christ today?

Where is Rome and all of her boasted empire and power?

Where is Christ's kingdom?

We are sometimes inclined to say with the poet, "Right forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne." That seems true only, however, at the short view. When we take the long view we understand that God is eternally standing in the shadow, keeping watch above His own. We know that though right may be on the scaffold, it rules the future. Men are inclined to take the short, hasty view of things, to make snap judgment, and to arrive at superficial conclusions. Wordsworth, in his poem, "The Borderers," makes one of his characters say,

> "Lacy, we look, but at the surface of things.
> We hear of towns in flames,
> Fields ravished, old and young driven out,
> To die of nakedness and famine.
> Then seize our swords, and rush upon a cure,
> That flatters us because it asks no thought.
> The real trouble is better hid.
> The world is poisoned at the heart."

Force always defeats itself.

Who won the case? The lawyers!

The victor is always the loser. His point may have been gained, but his loss is always infinitely greater than his gain, when that gain is made through force or contention.

Force tempts us. It is quick. It is easy. It is instantly available. It is the apparent and obvious

thing. Its use brings a kind of fierce joy and satisfaction to the beast, which, even in the best of us, lies only under the skin!

Here is force in all of its brute nature and sheer ugliness. Notice the ferocious look on the face of the soldier who holds the rope, as he leads Christ. Notice the rude push given the Saviour by the soldier from behind. Here are steel helmets, spears, and shields. Notice the suggestive way in which the spears pierce the darkness and stand out against the sky.

It is a vivid, tragic, tense scene where force is portrayed in all its brutal ugliness.

"They that take the sword will perish by the sword!" Force brings in its train more evils than it cures. Surely that ought to be clear to men today. Jesus declared that reliance upon violence is suicidal. When He said it, it could not possibly have seemed to be true. Here in this picture, it does not seem to be true. Those who are exercising force seem to have all the advantage of the situation. The truth of His saying, however, has emerged, clear, unmistakable, so that all men must believe it; and today, the world cannot believe anything else true! That truth, once so incredible, is becoming unescapable. Force and war can achieve none of the purposes for which Christ and Christianity serve. As a matter of fact, it is now no longer possible really to win a war. The victor is always, actually, the vanquished; and the vanquished, actually, the victor.

Shall we say that we wage war to protect the weak? It is a grim jest. Modern war protect the weak? Here is what it brings: ten million dead; three million presumed dead; thirteen million dead civilians; twenty million wounded; three million prisoners; nine million war-orphans; five million

war-widows; ten million refugees. Modern war protect the weak? Force, as exemplified in modern warfare, is the latest invention of the devil to destroy the race.

Love seems so slow. Force seems so fast. Love seems so weak. Force seems so strong. Love seems so uncertain. Force seems so sure. Love seems so indirect. Force seems so direct. But force will annihilate the race. Love will save the race. Love is the only way.

Reverend A. J. "Dad" Elliott tells of discovering conditions in a certain fraternity in one of our universities in this country. One of the fraternity boys told Dad of the unspeakable conditions that existed within that fraternity. Drunkenness, adultery, vice and debauchery of the most terrible kind were reported. Investigation proved the accuracy of the report. Dad's first reaction was to rush back to Chicago, get hold of the national secretary of that organization, and tell him that if things were not cleaned up there at once, he would rush into print and expose the whole thing. He thought it over, however, and his conscience rebuked him. It said to him—"You have been preaching the way of love as the way of reform, and now at the first crisis you are going to resort to force." He found one man in that fraternity who said he knew that there was one other man who would stand with him for clean, pure things. He thought possibly there might be another, thus making the group three. He knew *there were not four.* They got to work. They took their stand boldly and splendidly for the right. The result was that within eight months, a hundred and twenty men—the leaders on the campus and the leaders of that fraternity, met Dad and organized a Bible study class, and the study

of Hodgkin's book, "The Way of Jesus." He secured for them a good teacher and leader. They met once a week to study this book and to study the Bible, with the result that the entire complexion of that campus, including this particular fraternity, was changed.

Here is

## VI

## THE CRISIS OF A SOUL

Jesus, here, is looking on Judas. A few minutes later, Jesus is looking on Peter. It was a crisis for each of them. Consider how they met it.

When Christ looked upon Peter, Peter went out and wept bitterly. Let none minimize Peter's sin. He had grievously denied his Lord. He had boasted arrogantly; and he had failed miserably. He had warmed himself at the fire of his enemy. He had been cowardly and profane. But when the hour of crisis struck, his soul had responded—he "went out and wept bitterly." And Peter's tears washed out the record of his sin—for they were tears of repentance! When tears of repentance fall, that is what always happens to sin—Christ forgives it. Peter had wavered, but recovered himself, and had met the test. Face to face with the great issue, he had demonstrated the staunch and true fibre of his soul. There was momentary hesitancy, but there was no final failure. Mrs. Browning has pictured the scene in her lovely sonnet.

"The Christ, denied and scorned,
'LOOKED UPON PETER.' Oh to render plain,
By help of having loved a little, and mourned,
That look of sovran love and sovran pain,
Which He, who could not sin, yet suffered, turned
On him who could reject but not sustain.

"'The Saviour looked on Peter.' Ay, no word,
No gesture of reproach; the heaven serene,
Though heavy with armed justice, did not lean
Their thunders that way; the forsaken Lord
Looked only on the traitor. None record
What that look was; none guess; for those who have seen
Wronged lovers loving through a death-pang keen,
Or pale-cheeked martyrs smiling to a sword,
Have missed Jehovah at the judgment call.
And Peter from the height of blasphemy—
'I never knew this man'—did quail and fall,
As knowing straight THAT GOD; and turned free,
And went out speechless from the face of all,
And filled the silence, weeping bitterly.

"I think that look of Christ might seem to say:
'Thou, Peter! art thou a common stone
Which I at last must break My heart upon,
For all God's charge to His high angels may
Guard My feet better? Did I yesterday
Wash thy feet, My beloved, that they should run
Quick to destroy me 'neath the morning sun?
And do thy kisses, like the rest, betray?

"The cock crows coldly. Go, and manifest
A late contrition, but no bootless fear!
For, when thy final need is dreariest,
Thou shalt not be denied, as I am here;
My voice to God and angels shall attest,
Because *I know this man, let him be clear.*'"

Courage came from that look. Deeper zeal came from that look. Peter's devotion was born in that look. Peter's eloquence has its explanation in that look. Peter's unfailing faith to the very end, is to be ascribed to that look.

But here Jesus looked upon Judas. Even now, Judas might have been forgiven. Even now, he might have found peace, but he holds to his sin. His money purse hangs on the side of the rail away from Christ, and keeps him from coming! His ill-

gotten gains are damning his soul. It is a marvelous touch on the part of the artist. He sets his heart. He steels his will. He refuses to come. He will not!

Sam Jones was preaching at Atlanta, Georgia. He noticed a man who attended his meetings with great regularity, and who seemed to be very much impressed. One evening this man seemed to be on the point of making a decision for Christ. However, he was absent from the services for three evenings following and on the fourth evening he appeared with a look upon his face which Mr. Jones described as terrifying. Making inquiry, he found that this man had gone to his room. There he stayed for two days and two nights, fighting the matter of his surrender to Jesus Christ. At the end of that time, he came out, with face white and set, and announced that he would never be a Christian. The expression of his face was one of grim and awful determination, and one, that, as those who saw him said, was unspeakably awful. So Judas stands here under the look of Christ, and his soul resists the appeal of the Saviour. And he went out—and it was night! (John 13: 20). Now it was all past. The secret sin, the hardness of heart, the covetousness, all have moulded the soul until now, under the stress of an immediate decision, the soul stands up and steps out into the night *which it had made for itself!* "He went out—and it was night!" Night in the soul! A frenzy of evil! All the devils of hell holding carnival there. "And it was night!" The night of hopelessness! The night of lost opportunity! The night of shame! Night!—through all eternity! Halt, Judas, in thy mad departure! Turn to the Saviour, cast thyself upon His love and mercy. He may yet have mercy upon you.

The depths of the night into which Judas went, what soul can know? The stars of heaven hide their faces at the hideous blackness of the night into which he stepped—a blackness—a night—not external, but internal. "And Judas went out—and it was night!" Oh! the blackness of night without Christ!

Sir Francis Newport, hovering over the brink, cried out, "Oh! Eternity! Oh! Eternity! Who can discover the abyss of eternity? Who can paraphrase the words 'forever and forever'?"

The hour of crisis had come, and the soul had made its choice. "He went out and it was night."

Here

VII

LOVING GRIEF BECOMES COURAGEOUS ACTION

Notice how John weeps upon Peter's shoulder.

John is, for the moment, overcome with grief. But he quickly recovers and he presses on with his Lord to the trial. Peter, however, follows afar off. John does not allow his grief to overcome his action, or to master his loving devotion.

Here is

VIII

THE FIRST EVIDENCE OF TRIUMPH OUT OF WHAT LOOKED LIKE DEFEAT

It is a dark scene. It certainly bears all the indications of defeat. Here is the capture of Christ. But God has a way of drawing victory out of defeat, and even in this darkest hour there is promise of future progress and glory. This very scene of apparent defeat was influencing the life of one who was to be a great worker in the kingdom. Just

as the prayer of the dying Stephen, gave to the church, Paul; so the arrest of the Saviour, gave to the church, John Mark. For the young man seen in the picture, in the right central foreground, with a sheet about his shoulders, and with hands clasped before his bosom, is John Mark. This scene of disaster was to be used by the power and providence of God, as to fall out mightily for the furtherance of the Kingdom of Christ.

The Last Supper had been held in the house of John Mark's mother. The young man had heard much of the discourse of the Saviour with His disciples. He had followed them out, in eager interest, as they left the house, and went across the Kedron, into the Garden of Gethsemane. He had been a witness to the scenes there, and, at Christ's arrest, he, himself, was almost apprehended. He escaped only by leaving his sheet in the hands of his would-be capturers (Mark 14: 51, 52). And here, in this fleeting moment, there were set in motion influences which were to bear a marvelous harvest in the coming years. So powerful is influence.

Dad Elliott tells of the influence of certain splendid Christian young men in a university football team upon the life of another young man. The year before Dad entered the school, the football team, after a successful season, was entertained in the home of a millionaire. Before the evening was over, all of the men were drunk, and under the table, except one blond-headed Swede. He refused to drink. He declared that if God spared him he would clean up that beastly condition in the football team. When Dad entered school the next year, this big Swede came to him and said, "Elliott, if you can play football here as well as you have been playing it down at the academy, I want you to go out and

make the team, and help me clean this thing up." Elliott promised to try. He made the team, and he and five others, including this big Swede, set out to clean up conditions.

One man who had made the team that year was the most profane chap that ever entered the school. He could not open his mouth without a flood of the foulest kind of profanity coming forth. These six men on the team resolved that that thing had to stop, and that if he didn't change his ways they were going to bring it, in a forcible manner, to his attention. The next day as they were leaving the field, Elliott and this man were walking together. The man began to swear, and Elliott threw his arm around his shoulder and said, "I wish you wouldn't do that, you're taking the name of a very dear friend of mine in vain." The man looked at him in surprise and said, "Well, I noticed that there is a kind of atmosphere around the quarters against swearing." Elliott said, "I am mighty glad you discovered it, because that's exactly what is there."

And then this man told a story that almost broke Elliott's heart. He told how his father had been a drunkard, and had died shortly after his birth. He told how his mother had become a prostitute, and had deserted him when he was eight years old. He told Elliott that he had no relatives so far as he knew, and was alone in the world; that, from the time he was eight years old, he had slept in boxes and trucks in the seventeenth ward in Chicago. Then, turning to Elliott, he reached out a hand and gripped his in a grip like iron, and he said, "Elliott, if you fellows will give me a chance, if you will help me, I will promise that I will make good." Elliott says, that as he heard that man talk in that way, it almost broke his heart, and he cried out to him-

self, "My God, I wonder if I would have had the courage, and the ability, and the stamina to ever think of making my way through school, if my condition had been that of this boy." He shook his hand and he told him that they would all help him! They did!

Elliott saw that man fouled in the most terrible way in some of the later games; but he kept his temper. He played a clean, hard, straight game. Only once, after that day, did a word of profanity fall from that boy's lips, and instantly he apologized. That young man developed into a splendid Christian man. He is today a trustee of a Christian college in the West. He is a banker. He is a great influence and a power for good in his community. He is a man honored and respected; a man who is generous and devoted to the interests of the church; a man whose life counts for everything that is good. Every year he entertains the boys of the Freshman class of the college of which he is a trustee. After serving this dinner, he takes them into his library, where a fire has been kindled in the beautiful grate. The lights are turned out, and there, in the glow of the fire, he loves to reminisce. He tells of his companionship with the boys of the team, and of his discovery that they had a power in their lives which he, himself, did not have. He tells how he learned that that power was the Lord Jesus Christ, and how he surrendered his heart to Christ. He tells how Christ had been to him a source of power through all these years.

So powerful is influence. Out of defeat, victory came under God's hand. So here in the picture, victory is coming out of apparent defeat. The life of John Mark is gathering, here, influences which will bring for itself and for Christ—victory.

## Sermon XIV

### "EASTER MORNING"
### (From the Painting by Hofmann)

Scripture Lesson: *John 20:11-18*
Text: *John 20:18*

The reader is referred to other sermons in this volume based upon Hofmann's pictures, for an account of the artist's life and work. Most of Hofmann's work was of a religious nature. He delighted especially in portraying incidents from the life of Jesus Christ.

*The Picture.*

"Easter Morning" was one of Hofmann's earlier pictures dealing with the resurrection of Christ. It is typical of his splendid style, and of his thorough mastery of chiaroscuro. The detail is good. The anguish on the face of Mary is especially vivid. By his marvelous use of light and shade he has made the figure of Christ to appear incandescent—*on* the earth, but not *of* the earth. Technically the picture is an accurate portrayal of what may very well have been the actual scene at the tomb. One looks off from the mount, to the south, across the dark valley of the Kedron, and over to the hills in the distance —the highland of Judea. The barren nature of the ground, its rough, stony character, the tomb hewn out of the solid stone, all of these things are typically oriental.

*What Is in the Picture?*

Here is

## I

## BEAUTIFUL CHRISTIAN WOMANHOOD

Here is physical beauty and loveliness. This, of course, is the mark which God sets upon virtue. Lovely womanhood is the most beautiful and precious thing in the world. In Mary Slessor's account of her life and experience in the wilds of western Africa, no part of her work there was more distressing than that which brought her into close touch with the unspeakably repulsive degradation of the women of Africa. Charles Wesley used to say when he saw a drunkard reel down the street, "There but for the grace of God goes Charles Wesley." So every woman may and should say, "But for the grace of God I might be like the African women." It is the influence of Jesus Christ and the application of His teaching that has given womanhood its rightful place in the life and thought of the world, and has contributed to the sheer physical development and loveliness of women.

Here is

## II

## COMPASSION

Mary is suffering with the Saviour. That, of course, is the root meaning of the word compassion—"to suffer with."

Her heart is filled with compassion because He first had compassion upon her. This is the wonderful genius of compassion. It reproduces itself in other hearts. This world knew nothing about compassion until Christ came. He gathered men in His loving arms and took them to His tender heart. He understood their yearning and need and sin.

He had compassion upon them. He suffered with them and made their cause His own. His compassion for men has begotten in them a compassion for others and for Him. The tender compassion of the Saviour is His greatest appeal to men. He had confidence in men. He loved men. He appealed to the best that was in men, assuming that they had much of good in them. Under the glow of His love, and in the light of His confidence, beautiful qualities, the very existence of which they had not suspected, appeared in their lives. As these qualities began to manifest themselves, Christ rained upon them with the dew of His approval, and beamed upon them with the sun of His gladness, and they grew and developed—and men were amazed at themselves. That is the miracle which the artist is showing us in this picture. Mary, the abandoned sinful woman, has discovered in her own heart qualities which amaze her—qualities which grew up in response to the compassion of Christ. It is the Easter message. He is still abroad in the world in His power and love. He can still bring to resurrection these dormant and forgotten, these hidden and unsuspected qualities of the soul.

It was in seminary days that a great merchant prince of Chicago invited a group of us, students in the Seminary, to his home for dinner. After the evening meal, we went into the magnificent library, where, in one end of the room was a pipe organ. Seating himself at this lovely instrument, which had been built into the home, he began to play. Said he, "I never knew how to play this song until after the death of our little girl." His fingers meanwhile were running up and down the keys and he began the familiar strains of that lovely hymn,

"Have thine own way, Lord, have thine own way,
Thou art the potter, I am the clay.
Mold me, and make me after thy will
While I am waiting, yielded and still."

He played the organ and accompanied his playing with his rich, baritone voice. He said, "After our little girl died, on the last evening that we had her little body in the home, I found it impossible to sleep, and, in the middle of the night, crept down the stairs to stand for a moment at the side of her casket. I had not been there long before I was joined by the silent figure of my wife, and our fingers interlaced as we stood there at the side of our darling. As we stood there, we felt, as surely as I feel your presence here tonight, the presence of a third individual. (Speaking of it later, my wife said she had had the same conviction.) We knew it was Christ, who had come to us in the silent watches of the night, and His tender and loving sympathy was comforting and strengthening us."

In the compassion of Christ has been born all the compassion which His children have shown to those in sorrow and distress and need. Mary is suffering with the Saviour, because He first had suffered with her. He had loosed her from the bonds of Satan. His compassion had gone out toward her in a great miracle of grace, and had given birth in her heart to a great compassion which she, here, expressed for Him, and which she afterwards expressed for others.

It is an Easter thought of transcendant importance. If any man has buried his love, his faith in humanity, his devotion to little children, his confidence in the inherent value and worth of personality, his joy of life, his hope of heaven, Easter

bids us resurrect these ideals and give them new expression in life and thought.

Mary owed much to Him. She had been lost in sin. He had lifted her from the depths and made of her a noble woman whose life made the heart-beat of the world more tender and the breath of the world more sweet—a woman of compassion.

Here is

## III

## LOVE

Cecil DeMille, in his "King of Kings," has pictured in a most vivid way the conquest of Christ over this soul. He drives from her lust and pride, selfishness and vanity, self-will and greed and takes possession of her soul. In DeMille's picture these evil powers are shown in human form, striving vainly to retain their place in her heart, but are gradually and utterly driven out by the conquering force of the personality of Christ. In this picture Mary's hands are empty. She brings no costly gift. She brings only herself—most precious gift of all, and there, in utter humility, and with unspeakable love, presents herself to Him—her Lord. Mary had wealth. There is no gold in the picture. Mary had servants. Here she is alone. Mary had costly garments of fur and ermine. There is none of that here. Mary knew and associated with kings and princes. They do not appear. Watts teaches the same lesson in his picture, "Sic Transit Gloria Mundi." Watts in his picture comes at it, however, from another angle! *Things* are there, but *he* is not there. God cannot be satisfied with *things* but only with *us*. It is this which is emphasized in his picture. Mary appears *alone*. Alone we are born. Alone we face the great crises of life. Alone we meet temptation

and fall or triumph. Alone we face our sin. Alone we bear our griefs. Alone we pass through the gates of death. Alone!—yet not alone, for He is with us! That is the message of this picture. Mary is alone, but she has come to be near Him. There is love in every line of her body. She loves Him for what He has done for her. He believed in her. He saw in her beauty and loveliness which she herself did not suspect, and because He saw it and had faith in her—Lo!—it appeared. Of course she loved Him. She could not help but love Him. He had saved her. He had shown her life and reclaimed her soul. He had curtained her off from all the universe, shown her the splendor clad heights of a transformed womanhood and then had lifted her thereto, from whence she could see the glory beaming hills of God's eternity. He had transformed her from a sinner into a saint. (One set apart, the words mean. It is not necessary, I hope, for me to remind you that the word has no reference to perfection.) "Making a saint is God's biggest work. Compared with it, making stars and suns and oceans is a puny task. The Psalmist tells us the universe was architectured on this fashion: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: He layeth up the deeps in storehouses. . . . For He spake, and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast." But God cannot command a saint into being, any more than He can command His own nature to violate itself. What wooing, and coaxing, and persuading, and loving is required of God to make a saint!"

He had opened for her the golden door of life here and in eternity.

"When I have won to the Golden Door,
Who will open to me?
'They who have had on this little earth
Alms or a smile from thee.'

"When I have won to the Golden Door,
What will be writ thereon?
'This is the gate of the Evermore
The goal of the Evergone.'

"When I have won to the Golden Door,
What shall I see beyond?
'Work for the lustry, beds for the tired,
Love for lips that are fond.'

"When I have won to the Golden Door,
What will the password be?
'Love is the password, love is the toll,
Love is the golden key.' "

Mary had won the Golden Door.

Here is

## IV

## WORSHIP

Mary was not troubled as to His deity. She knew He was God. His power in her life had been such as only God could exercise. It is extremely significant that the first heresy of the early church was a doubt as to His humanity. They who were closest to Him could believe Him God more easily than they could believe Him man. That is the experience of every soul transformed under the loving hand of the Saviour. Let a man find release from his sin and shame, from the evil habits of years, and he has no difficulty in accepting the deity of Jesus Christ, but, like Mary, falls before Him in utter worship.

Dr. Geikie, in his monumental work, "The Life of Christ," has given us what he imagines must have

been the scene when Jesus first came into contact with Mary Magdalen. "The sun was just setting, but a few beams seemed to have lingered, to die away on His face, and the full moon rose from behind the brown hills, still bathed in purple, as if to see Him. The soft evening wind had risen to cool His brow, and the waters, sparkling in the moonlight, heaved and sank round the boat, rocking it gently. As it touched the shore there were few people about, but a boat from Magdala lay near, with a sick person in it, whom it had taken her mother's utmost strength to hold, and keep from uttering loud cries of distress. She had been brought in the hope of finding Jesus, that He might cure her.

"Master," said John, "there is work yonder for you already." "I must always be doing the work of Him that sent me," replied Jesus; "the night cometh when no man can work." The mother of the sick woman had recognized Him at the first glance, for no one could mistake Him, and forthwith cried out with a heart-rending voice, "O Jesus, our Helper and Teacher, Thou Messenger of the All-Merciful, help my poor child,—for the Holy One, blessed be His name, has heard my prayer that we should find Thee, and Thou us." Peter forthwith, with the help of the other three, who had let their oars rest idly on the water, turned the boat, so that it lay alongside the one from Magdala. Jesus now rose; the mother sank on her knees; but the sick woman tried with all her might to break away, and to throw herself into the water, on the far side of the boat. The steersman, however, and John, who had sprung over, held her by the arms, while her mother buried her face in the long plaited hair of her child. Her tears had ceased to flow; she was lost in silent prayer. "Where are these people from?" asked

Jesus of the boatman, and added to His disciples, when He heard that she came from Magdala, "Woe to this Magdala, for it will become a ruin for its wickedness! The rich gifts it sends to Jerusalem will not help it, for, as the prophet says, 'They are bought with the wages of uncleanness, and to that they will again return.' Turn her face to me, that I may see her," added He. It was not easy to do this, for the sick one held her face bent over towards the water as far as possible. John managed it, however, by kind words. "Mary," said he, for he had asked her mother her name, "do you wish to be forever under the power of demons? See, the Conqueror of demons is before thee; look on Him, that you may be healed. We are all praying for you, as Moses, peace be to him, once prayed for his sister,— 'O God, heal her.' Do not put our prayer to shame; now is the moment when you can make yourself and your mother happy." These words told; and no longer opposing strength to strength, she allowed them to raise her head and turn her face to Jesus. But when she saw Him, her whole body was so violently convulsed that the boat swayed to and fro, and she shrieked out the most piercing wails, which sounded far over the lake.

Jesus, however, fixing His eyes on hers, kept them from turning away, and as He gazed, His look seemed to enter her soul, and break the sevenfold chain in which it lay bound. The poor raving creature now became quiet, and did not need to be held; her convulsions ceased, the contortions of her features and the wildness of her eyes passed off, and profuse sweat burst from her brow and mingled with her tears. Her mother stepped back, and the healed one sank down on the spot where her mother had been praying, and muttered, with subdued,

trembling words, to Jesus—"O Lord, I am a great sinner; is the door of repentance still open for me?" "Be comforted, my daughter," answered He, "God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; thou hast been a habitation of evil spirits, become now a temple of the living God." The mother, unable to restrain herself, broke out—"Thanks to Thee, Thou Consolation of Israel," but He went on,—"Return now quickly to Magdala and be calm, and give thanks to God in silence." John stepped back into the boat to Jesus, and the other boat shot out into the lake, on the way home. The two women sat on the middle seat. Mary held her mother in her arms in grateful thanks, and neither spoke, but both kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, till the shore, jutting out westwards, hid Him from their sight."

Harold Begbie in his "Souls in Action," records the experience of many such individuals. The power of Christ as He brought it to bear upon the heart of Mary is still operative in the world. Mary knows that He is God. So does every soul that has come to Him in faith, believing.

## V

## THE NATURAL MAJESTY AND POWER OF CHRIST

Christ appears on the scene as naturally as though He were the gardener. He is indeed the great gardener of life. He it is who believes in life. He it is who believes in growth. He it is who believes in the mastery of spirit over matter.

Edwin Arnold has put these words beautifully into the mouth of Mary.

> "So I turned to wipe
> The hot drops off; and, look! Another one
> Standing behind me, and my foolish eyes

Hard gazing on Him, and not knowing Him!
Indeed, I deemed this was the Gardener
Keeping the trees and tomb, so was He flesh;
So living, natural, and made like man,
Albeit, if I had marked—if any ray
Of watchful hope had helped such a look,
Such presence, beautiful and pure; such light
Of loveliest compassion in His face,
Had told my beating heart and blinded eyes
WHO this must be. But I—my brow i' the dust—
Heard Him say softly: 'Wherefore weepest thou?
Whom seekest thou?' A little marveled I—
Still at His feet, too sorrowful to rise—
He should ask this—the void grave gaping near,
And He its watchman; yet His accents glad.
'Sir,' said I, 'if 'tis thou hast borne Him hence,
Tell me where thou hast laid Him. Then will I
Bear Him away!'

It is just so that Christ appears naturally and beautifully, stepping into the midst of the most trying scenes and experiences of our lives. There is no scene, whether of joy or of sorrow, into which He does not fit perfectly. In this picture Hofmann has placed upon His face such benignant grace, such majesty and sympathetic power, such calm and conscious strength in the attitude of the body, such radiant beauty and life in the form, as to proclaim Him in very truth, the risen Christ, the conqueror of death, the Lord and King of life!

Here is

## VI

## THE MASTERY OF SPIRIT OVER MATTER

Hofmann has indicated this by the fact that the stone, which had been placed before the door of the tomb, *lies broken.* A great piece is chipped from the corner of it, it has been thrown aside and the empty tomb stands revealed to the gaze of the world.

We must bear in mind, of course, that the earthquake was no part of the machinery of the resur-

rection. The stone was rolled away, not that Christ might come out, but rather, that men might see that *He was already out.*

Here is the supremacy of the spirit over matter. In what vivid way the preacher artist emphasizes the fact! Mountains are stupendous. Stars and planets are multitudinous, with immeasurable distances between them. The human intellect is staggered and bewildered before the appalling material forces of the universe. But, after all, spirit is superior to any of them—and to all of them combined. Personality is the only priceless thing in the universe. The mountains weigh more. The stars number more. But man *is* more. Not one of the countless stars, which the astronomer sees by the sweep of his telescope, can pray, or love, or weep, or forgive, or sin, or repent! God is not enamoured of avoirdupois. A mother does not love her child according to weight. It is man, it is spirit upon which God exercises the most care, and about which He is most deeply concerned. Here spirit has triumphed royally over matter. So radiantly victorious is spirit that it actually controls the body, and takes to itself *a resurrection body* pictured here beautifully by Hofmann. It is a glowing illustration of what psychologists are now beginning to tell us, namely, that the thoughts of the mind, the movements of the soul, the attitude of the spirit have a way of working themselves out and becoming very clearly visible upon the surface of life. Even the face of a man comes in time to tell the story of that man's heart and reveal the history of his life. So spirit always triumphs over matter. The stone may be rolled to the door, but no stone nor stones can successfully imprison a spirit. At best the only

service to which matter can be placed is that of a resting place for spirit; *and so Mary Magdalene seats herself upon the shattered rock!*

Here is

## VII

## LIFE OUT OF DEATH

This is one of the most beautiful and subtle touches that Hofmann has placed in his picture. Notice that the tree lives upon what seems to be only barren rock. Its roots have gone deep down into the granite, until, by the sheer force of its own native life, it has actually snapped asunder the great slab of granite, upon which it found footing.

It is in this way that the artist would draw our attention to the vibrant life which is peculiar to Christ, whose figure stands over directly against that of the tree. He is the King and Lord of life. In Him is life so triumphant, so transcendent, so powerful that it conquers death. Just as the tree, by its inherent life, has survived the opposition of the granite, so Christ, by the vigor of His life, has stepped out of the granite tomb. The mind and spirit is very dull in one who does not see the beautiful psychology and the transcendent spiritual inspiration which lie concealed in this subtle contrast in paint.

He is indeed the Conqueror. He conquered life. He conquered death. He has conquered through all the history of the world, and will continue to do so!

> "I saw the conquerors riding by
> With cruel lips and faces wan:
> Musing on kingdoms sacked and burned
> There rode the Mongol Ghengis Khan.

And Alexander, like a God,
Who sought to weld the world in one;
And Caesar with his laurel wreath;
And like a thing from Hell the Hun;

And, leading like a star, the van,
Heedless of upstretched arm and groan,
Inscrutable Napoleon went,
Dreaming of empire, and alone . . . .

Then all they perished from the earth,
As fleeting shadows from a glass,
And, conquering down the centuries,
Came Christ, the Swordless, on an ass."

Here is

## VIII

## OIL OUT OF THE ROCK

Hofmann's sojourn and study in the Orient gave him knowledge which he uses here to splendid effect. This is an olive tree. Now there is a very interesting peculiarity of the olive tree about which our Occidental people know nothing. The tree delights in a hard, rocky soil. It insinuates its roots into the cracks of the rock and into the crevices of the stony marl. It is from such a footing as this that it draws its richest oil. If the overlying mold is so deep that its roots cannot reach the rock the tree languishes and its berries are small and sapless. It is this peculiar fact to which Moses makes reference in his song recorded in Deuteronomy 32:13, where he speaks of "oil out of the flinty rock." And so this young olive tree, which has rooted itself upon the very face of the rock, gives promise of a rich and abundant harvest of oil.

To the Oriental olive oil is the staff of life. It is the great necessity, having which, even the poorest feel themselves in a measure content, and without which, even the wealthy count themselves in desper-

ate need. Notice again that Hofmann has set his olive tree, with its roots penetrating the granite, *over against the figure of Christ.* There is the richest kind of suggestion in this arrangement.

The artist preacher is attempting to bring into vivid psychological view one of the most profound truths which he hoped to emphasize in his picture, namely, *the close relationship which exists between the rich harvest of the olive tree, if it is rooted in rock; and the countless blessings that have flown out upon the world from Christianity, firmly established upon the rock-bottom fact of the resurrection of Christ.*

Let it be said clearly that the resurrection of Christ is an historical event, as capable of legal and scientific proof as is any fact in history. This is not a theological statement. It is one of simple evidence and veritable truth. It does not depend upon any emotional attitude nor Christian predilection for its acceptance. The resurrection of Christ is the corner-stone of Christianity. It is fact, thoroughly established, absolutely irrefutable. And out of this firm, rock-foundation Christianity has poured countless blessings upon the human race, comparable, in their healing, sustaining and refreshing power, to the glorious oil of the olive tree, which is produced only as the tree roots itself in the rock.

Do you see the beautiful psychology of the scene? It is the artist's way of saying that the gracious blessing of Christianity *must* go back to and depend upon some such unshakable foundation as the resurrection of Jesus Christ. A religion such as Christianity, which has dominated the centuries, which has turned the stream of time into new channels, which has torn the gates of empire from off their

hinges, *must* be more than a vague and beautiful dream. It must, somewhere, somehow, rest upon a firm foundation. The olive tree yields no oil without the rock. Religion brings no blessing without the rock of the resurrection. What the granite is to the tree—that the resurrection of Christ is to Christianity.

The world has seen other beautiful religions. Mythraism had many teachings as idealistically lovely, as transportingly spiritual, as has Christianity. But mythraism fell, having failed to shape the world, to touch and mould and conquer the hearts of men, because it did not rest upon a firm basis of actual facts. You cannot set a great structure upon a fog bank. There must be more than "vague poetry, transcendently sweet." If the resurrection of Christ is *only* poetry, if He "rose from a grave of obloquy, to a throne of honor" only in some ravishingly lovely but utterly intangible sense, then "He is not risen; we are found false witnesses of God; our faith is vain; we are yet in our sins; they that sleep in Christ are perished, and we are of all men most miserable." (1 Cor. 15:12-20). Then every funeral service is a cruel mockery, a hollow waste of time, and there is no word of comfort to be spoken to any sorrowing soul in all the earth. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:21-22).

This is the eternal basis of our faith. Christ lived, taught, died, and rose from the grave—a *literal resurrection* which left an empty tomb, and *He lives in present power.*

Thus "oil from the rock" has flowed down throughout all the ages. Without this foundation fact the Christian religion would have been impotent, just as an olive tree is powerless to produce oil unless it roots into rock.

## Sermon XV

## "THE ASCENSION"

(From the Painting by Hofmann)

Scripture Lesson: *Acts 1:1-10.*
Text: *Luke 24:50 and 51.*

*The Artist.*

The reader is referred to the sermon entitled, "The Christ," for a discussion of Hofmann and his work.

*The Picture.*

This picture was one of the artist's latest, finished near the close of his life. The original is in red, blue, white, black, gray, and orange. In technique, it is very similar to Raphael's picture, "The Sistine Madonna." The disciples, who appear at the bottom of the picture, are comparable to the little children who appear in Raphael's picture. The two angel figures compare with the two adoring figures which Raphael has placed in his "Sistine Madonna"; while around the border of both pictures appears a fringe of heavenly faces. In this case the central feature is Christ, and in Raphael's picture it is Christ and the mother. The two pictures are strangely complimentary. In Raphael's, the mother and Child step from eternity to begin the great work of redemption. In this picture the work is finished, and Christ is shown re-entering eternity.

It is one of Hofmann's best pictures. It exemplifies, in a striking way, his illustrative talent and his ideal conception of Biblical events. When Hofmann

paints a Biblical scene, we can never think of it in any other terms than those in which he set it forth,—it is so real, so obvious, so logical; one wonders why he himself had not thought of it before in that way; and one feels certain that it could have happened in no other way.

*What Is the Picture?*

Here is

## I

## HELPLESS HUMAN OBSERVATION

We boast of our part in God's work. We are exceedingly busy, and bustlingly important! We feel tremendous weight of responsibility. We are humbled thereby if we are thoroughly consecrated, or made arrogant thereby if we are not thoroughly consecrated. But it must amuse God,—our attitude of self-importance! Of course, we do have a vital part in the work of the Kingdom of God. God might have done His work through agencies and by means entirely aside from ourselves. He has elected, however, to use us and to depend upon us in a great way. However, when that is said, one must quickly say that *at the great crises of His Kingdom,* God *acts* and we *watch.*

At the Saviour's birth, God acted and men watched.

God commandeered the planets of heaven. He conscripted the angel choir. He struck fear into the hearts of earth's rulers.

He *acted* and men *watched!*—in helpless human observation.

At the wicked plan of Herod, God broke through the circle of hatred with High angelic messengers. He sent Joseph and Mary and the child to a place of safety.

God was acting. Men watched.

At the baptism, God thrust His hand through the Jewish ritual, and laid it upon the heart of His Son, giving to Him the full consciousness of His transcendent mission, and then, in order that stupid men might better understand, God used the visible and audible devices of the dove and of the voice.

God was acting. Men were watching.

On the cross, God was acting,—strangely, magnificently, beautifully, acting. The spear plunged into the side of Christ. At least so it seemed to men. But it was not only the spear that went into His side. It was the sins of all the race, a thousand spears,—plunge after plunge, deeper and deeper and deeper until the silence and composure that before had characterized Christ, gave way to a groan, through which rumbled the sorrows of time and the woes of eternity.

God was acting. Men were watching.

The Son of God was taking upon His heart all the need of this sin-cursed world, and, as He did so, all nature joined in the dirge, and creation hid its face from the agony of its Creator. The Scripture says, "And the people stood beholding."

God was acting. Men were watching, in helpless human observation.

At the tomb the Roman soldiers paced to and fro, on guard. They thought they were important. How futile they were! Within that silent tomb God was *working!* Men were watching,—in helpless human observation. The King of Life lay in the embrace of death, and all the denizens of the nether world crowded exultingly about Him. The grave was rejoicing, thinking that, at last, it held in its mouldy embrace, the King of Life. The citizens of hell trembled, however, as they came and observed the silent

form of Christ, for He was terrible, and unspeakably majestic, even in His stillness. While death was exulting, and the grave was rejoicing, a cosmic thrill shook the foundations of the universe. It troubled the stars, and threw all hell into confusion,—and He arose! Quietly He laid aside the cerements of death, and stepped out radiantly victorious!

God was woking! Men were watching!

At the ascension, no help was asked from these men. They had walked out together, conversing about the things of the Kingdom, and as they talked, "While they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1: 10, 11).

God was working! Men were watching!

And so He works today! And so men watch. History is shaping itself before our eyes in accordance with prophecy. World events of unspeakable importance are taking form.

God is working. Men are watching.

We watch with unseeing eyes, and with foggy brain, and with sluggish heart. We watch, as did those about the cross,—"Sitting down they watched him there." And so we, like they, *see,* but *behold* not. We *look,* but *perceive* not.

God is working, and we stand in helpless human observation.

Here is the pledge of

## II

## THE CHRISTIAN'S GLORIFICATION

Christ appeared after His resurrection in His glorified resurrection body. It was this body in which He appeared to His disciples. It was this body in which He ascended. It is this body in which He is seated at the right hand of God. It is this body in which He stood to welcome the martyred Stephen to heaven! (Acts 7: 54-56). It is this body in which our beloved dead shall be raised. It is this body in which those who do not pass through death, but are caught up, shall meet Him in the air (I Corinthians 15: 51-55 and I Thessalonians 5: 15-18). It is this body to which the minister refers when he stands by the open grave and says, "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes,—looking for the appearing of the our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. For He shall come in power and great glory, and at His coming, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead, and they shall be raised *with bodies incorruptible like unto His own glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.*"

The sceptical in the early church sneeringly asked: "With what body do they come forth?" (I Corinthians 15: 35, 36, and 38). The answer Paul gives clearly, "God will give them a body, as it hath pleased Him." It will be a body similar to this ascension body of our Lord. It is not at all necessary that the identical atoms of which our present bodies are composed, should be gathered together and brought back to our body. When the body returns to dust, these atoms scatter and mingle in many different ways. An apple tree, planted at the grave of an ancient saint, was found, upon exami-

nation, to have sent its roots down into the casket. One root followed the backbone, dividing at the legs. The very atoms that composed that good man's body were transformed, in the chemistry of nature, into the fruit that hung upon that tree. This fruit was consumed by many different people. These atoms will never be reassembled, and assume again the identity which they had as parts of his body. It is not the *identity* of the molecules composing our bodies, but *their number and relation* that constitute identity. Our bodies, while we are alive, are constantly changing. Doctors tell us that they change completely every seven years, and yet our identity remains. A whirlpool is composed of rapidly changing particles of water, but the whirlpool retains its identity as a whirlpool. The beams of the sun are constantly changing, but the sunlight is exactly the same. We are not to suppose for one moment that the love and power of God are to be baffled by any such problem as this. The grave is not as strong as our Saviour. The Scripture teaches a *literal resurrection of the body.* It is not necessary to insist upon the resurrection of the very *identical* body,—the same hair, the same teeth, the same finger nails,—that were put into the ground. The grain of wheat upon the stalk is not the same grain that was planted; but it is wheat! Jesus says that we are "*children of the resurrection*" (Luke 20:35). This is a very interesting phrase. The development of a human body in the world occupies, physicians tell us, about twenty-eight years. It takes this long for it to reach its full maturity. But in the resurrection it will not be so. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" the soul will spring to the new body which God has prepared for it, "according to the mighty workings, whereby, He is able

to subdue all things unto Himself" (Philippians 3:21). It will be a body with all of the powers and none of the limitations of our present body. It will be a glorious, redeemed, transformed body similar to that with which our dear Lord ascended into heaven and appeared after His resurrection.

Here is

## III

## INESTIMABLE GAIN

We are sometimes inclined to bemoan the fact that Christ left the earth, that He is not here in physical form. We sing that beautiful little song,

"I wish that His hands had been placed on my head;
That His arms had been thrown around me;
That I might have seen His kind look when He said,
" 'Let the little ones come unto me.' "

It is a beautiful song, but we do not well to lament the fact He is no longer here, visibly upon the earth. When He was here in the flesh He was limited. He was not in Galilee while He was in Jerusalem. He was not at Nazareth when He was in Tiberias. He was limited, voluntarily, to be sure, but none the less actually and rigidly. Even after His resurrection He was limited. Not in so great a degree as before His resurrection, but none the less really.

The gains of the ascension are tremendous. John 16:7 makes that very clear. Said he, "If I do not go, the Comforter will not come, but if I go, I will send Him, who shall lead you into all truth." Had He not ascended, the Comforter would not have come. How great a gain is the presence of the Comforter? One need only to read such a book as "The Christ of the Indian Road," in which E. Stanley Jones describes the marvelous workings of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of the natives of India, to understand just how great a gain the presence of

the Holy Spirit is to the Kingdom of Christ. Indeed, the Christian who is informed thoroughly understands that without the power of the Holy Spirit, the entire cause of Christ and the advancement of the Kingdom would stop. It is not the preacher's eloquence; it is not the ingenuous plans of the church; it is not the organizations and the skillful manipulations of clubs and societies which advances the Kingdom of Christ. It is the power of the Holy Spirit. He takes the word that is spoken. He takes the song that is sung. He takes the plans that are made. He takes the human industry, and faith, and ability, and so uses all of it as to bring it powerfully to bear upon the heart, and to lead to the conversion of men and women. No human soul has ever yet been won to Christ in all of the work of the church, save as the Holy Spirit has taken of the truth, and applied it directly and convincingly to the heart and conscience of the individual hearer! The gains of the ascension! Who can enumerate or evaluate them?

By the ascension, His power was changed from one that was local to one that was universal. E. Stanley Jones says, "Nine years ago Dr. John R. Mott was speaking in a fine hall in India to a non-Christian audience. In the midst of his address he used the name of Christ, and the audience hissed him. Nine years later we were in that same hall with one topic for six nights,—'Jesus Christ and Him Crucified.' The audience increased every night until the last night they were standing around the doors and windows. I gave the invitation to those who would surrender themselves to Christ, leaving the question of baptism to their own inner convictions, to come and take the front seats. I felt at the time that if *one* would come I should be grateful,

for William Carey had said that if one of these high-castes should ever be converted, it would be as great a miracle as the raising of the dead. But that night between a hundred and a hundred and fifty came forward on that proposal." His power is now universal—since the ascension!

A few years ago I was talking to a devoted English missionary who was confused and discouraged about the national situation. She wondered of what use it was to try any more to do Christian work in India since Britain had lost moral hold upon India. There was such bitterness everywhere, and she could feel it. We talked about the inner meaning of things, and I told her of what I had seen. I shall never forget the look on her face as she said: "I see the light. Christ is bigger than my empire, and His Kingdom may come either through it or in spite of it. I see light bursting through these clouds that have hung over me." A little window had let her see a great light.

Before the ascension, His presence was occasional.

Since the ascension it is constant.

Before the ascension His presence was formal.

Since the ascension it is vital.

Before the ascension His presence was approximate.

Since the ascension it is inner.

Our presence with one another is occasional, formal and approximate; but His presence is constant, vital, and inner.

Tennyson glimpses the truth, and phrases it in beautiful way when he says "nearer than breathing, closer than hands and feet."

By the very nature of the case, we cannot be very near to one another. These bodies of ours are barriers, through which we must pierce to communicate

with one another. Christ, in the days of His flesh, was limited in this way, exactly as we are. One of the transcendant gains of the ascension is His *spiritual presence with His people.* It is the ascension which made this possible.

To quote Dr. Jones again, speaking of Christ in the East, he says:

"He and the facts not only command us to go, but He, standing in the East, beckons us to come. He is there—deeply there, before us. We not only take Him; we go to Him. Of this vivid and tragic truth, He gives us a vision in that glimpse of the last day: 'I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.' The righteous cry, 'Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?' The amazing words fall from His lips: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . ye have done it unto me.' Whom do we feed when we feed the hungry of India? That pinched man before me? Yes, and more—our own Christ is hungry in that man. And when I put the chalice to the parched lips of India—to whose lips do I put it? That man athirst before me? Yea, more, for my own Christ is again athirst in him. I do not have to take Christ to India—He is there in the perpetual incarnation of human need. When we do it to them we do it to Him. 'This whole question is vascular: cut it anywhere and it will bleed.' If Christ is in this, I do not see how we can be out of it."

Does some one say, "Oh, yes, I suppose He is closer to us, but it is *just a spiritual presence!*" Blind, dull, slow of understanding! Spiritual presence is the

*only real presence!* Why is the companionship of a man better than that of a stone? Because of personality,—a spiritual quality! Why does an idea never make its way in the world until it masters some man or woman and makes of them a flaming advocate? Because an idea is utterly impotent until it attaches to itself an indomitable *spirit.* It is simply a modern emphasis on the old, old truth,—"things that are seen are temporal, the things that are unseen are eternal." Spirit and the spiritual compose the ultimate reality.

As far as possible, let us think ourselves back into the situation of the early disciples, in order to understand what these post-resurrection appearances of the Saviour meant to them. It is, of course, almost impossible for us to realize the emotions of the little band. They understood that Jesus had been put to death. They had supposed themselves permanently deprived of His presence and help, and did not know what to think concerning it. But when He stood once more among them, after He had arisen, a sudden and strange revolution took place in their minds. They were instantly transformed from a band of discouraged and hopeless men into men who were filled with exulting joy, and with an indomitable passion and determination which took them before kings, and nerved them to face all kinds of hardship and suffering. They preached constantly,—blazing witnesses to the truth of the strange thing which they had witnessed. They saw before them, Him whom they had revered as the Messiah, while He was clothed in human weakness. But now He was raised to an unimaginable glory, which at once confirmed and purified their former faith. They understood that, through some strange power of love, He had been victorious over the

grave, and was clothed with the attributes of the eternal world. In a moment the whole sweep of the truth respecting Him, which before they had only half realized, became a radiant reality to their hesitating senses. Their imperfect faith in His dignity and power to fulfil all that He had promised to do here and hereafter, while He yet lived, had seemed from the catastrophe of these last disastrous days, a fond and beautiful delusion. But now He appears among them, triumphant, having broken all restraints; and He floods their whole soul with sacred light as never before. And now, having companied with them again in tender companionship and beautiful love, He rises from them!

It means that the whole life of one who has been thus honored, one upon whom His hand has fallen, and over whom had come His gracious influence, must look back ever after upon the experience as upon a long dream of wonder! Such a one must feel henceforth even in the midst of his most common work as if Christ was still, though unseen, beside him. He would still hear His words of constant love, and would still live in habitual communion with Him as with one, hidden though it might be, for the moment in the upper life, but to be expected as a visible form at any instant. It is just such a feeling as this that is evident in every page of the gospels, and the epistles. It is such a psychological attitude as this that characterizes every true believer in Jesus Christ, and dominates his life; controlling the motives, directing the impulses and giving purpose to all of life. To be sure, His presence is spiritual. Shall we say *only* spiritual? Rather, *triumphantly* spiritual. *Dominatingly* spiritual. *Eternally* spiritual. *Gloriously* spiritual.

Here is

## IV

## HEAVENLY REJOICING AT HIS FINISHED WORK

Notice the angelic adoration and the heavenly faces crowding the parapet of heaven, to welcome back their Lord and Master. A study of these faces will reveal the presence of men, women and children.

These are not angels. They are the redeemed host of God. These are they who, before His coming, were saved by faith in a Saviour who was to come. These are the radiant heavenly host of which our loved ones, gone over before us, already form a part. Christ had come in poverty and lowliness. He had entered the world through another man's stable. He had left the world through another man's tomb. The life between the manger at Bethlehem and the tomb of Joseph, had been one of suffering and privation, of hard and bitter toil. Now, however, He had finished the work which God gave Him to do, and the heavenly hosts, in eager joy, welcome Him back to the Father's house.

Here is

## V

## HIS BENEDICTION UPON HIS CHURCH

Notice that the arms of the Saviour are uplifted in tender benediction upon the infant church, for the church was an infant here. These astonished men composed it. They were the only ones who belonged to it. Here is the original church; and He blessed it in benediction. The church was foolish and undiscerning at this period. It asked the most inane questions. "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdoms of Israel?" (Acts 1: 6). But He patiently replies, adding a word, the radiant

power of which they were to realize fully later on: "It is not for you to know the times nor the season which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth." And so saying, He lifted His hands in benediction, and gave to them His parting blessing. He desired to leave them in such way that they would not expect Him quickly to return. They were not to wait for His instant reappearance. He desired to make it clear to them that He returned from the earth to His Father; and that God took Him to Himself, as He had taken Elijah. They would then be able to tell men, when they asked where He now was, that they had seen Him leave the world, and pass through the skies into the eternal Kingdom in His human body, to sit down on the right hand of God. Therefore, their message and their source of comfort would be, "He lives. He is with the Father, and from Him in His own good time and way, He will return."

We do not know just what the final words were which the Saviour spoke to them. All that is told us is that He gave them His blessing with uplifted hands. Slowly, gradually, He had raised their conception nearer the unspeakable grandeur of His own true nature and work. He had come to them first as a Teacher, and then had gradually disclosed to them revelations of Himself as the Son of God, veiled in the form of man; and now, since His crucifixion and resurrection, He had led them to see in Him the Messiah, the exalted, immortal, divine Majesty, the Conqueror of death, the Lord of all, the Judge of the earth, and the coming King. After His disappearance, in order to add solemnity, and to bear

still more deeply upon the consciences of these disciples, the significance, and the importance of the event which they had witnessed, two angels appeared in white apparel and said to them, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into the heavens? This same Jesus who is even now taken from you into heaven, will come in the same manner as ye have seen Him go."

And so He blessed His infant church, and He still blesses it. Study the history of the church. See its blunders and its schisms; consider its heresy, its greed, its sin, and heart-breaking corruption. See also its heroic souls who save it from itself; its martyrs and its flaming zeal, its steady progress against corruption within and without. One then understands that only the blessing of the Master has preserved it, and will bring it to final triumph and glory. Christ's blessing is upon the church. It is His church. He has established it; and the gates of hell shall not, and *cannot* prevail against it. It is through the ministry of the church that blessing has come to this sin-staggering world. Every great advance, spiritual and material, which the race has made, may be definitely traced to the message and ministry of the church. Our very material prosperity, as Babson reminds us, is due to the message of the preachers! "Righteousness exalteth a nation" (Proverbs 14:34). And through the work of the church there will come the glorious intervention stages of His kingdom, resulting in the salvation of the returning Christ; the ushering in of the final and ultimate redemption of this old world.

THE END

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